2: Becher--vii E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Surára
Pakidái

/X/

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Location of the Settlement Area of the Surára and Pakidái

2: Becher--1 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Surára
Pakidái

/1/

1. Geographical Introduction

131 The habitation and roaming area of the Surára and Pakidái lies between the Demini and Aracá rivers -- a terra incognita within the large area between Rio Branco, Rio Uraricuera, Serra Parima, and Rio Negro, which up to now has been so little opened up ethnologically and geographically.

133 The Rio Demini is a left tributary of the middle Rio Negro. Its source is in the Serra Parima, in the Brazilian-Venezuelan border area, and its mouth is just above Barcelos, the former capital of "Capitania do Rio Negro." The water of this river is 133 white, whereas the numerous lakes along its banks and all its 134 tributaries, such as the Aracá, a right tributary of the lower Demini, have black water. The tributaries of the Aracá, on the other hand, are characterized by clear water. This peculiarity is connected with soil conditions, soil erosion, and the topography of the catchment areas. Thus, soil erosion in very mountainous terrain causes a light coloring, whereas in a very flat, swampy region dark humus substances overflow into the water and darken it. It is further noteworthy that black water is healthier and 133 tastier and, in standing, does not leave a dirty sediment. Even 136 water turtles and fish that have lived in black water are tastier than the same animals taken from white-water rivers or lakes. Moreover, it should be pointed out that mosquitoes appear in considerably smaller numbers along black water than along white. On the Rio Demini one can scarcely defend oneself from the small piuns (Simulium sp., day gnats) and the large carapanãs (Anopheles); the latter are the dangerous malaria-carriers. The lower course and part of the middle course are therefore completely fever-infested.

137 The two types of water also result in different kinds of vegetation. Characteristic for the Rio Demini are the igapós (inundated forests with tall trees standing close together), between which there is very seldom any terra firma. On the higher banks of the Aracá, however, one finds primarily low scrub-forest. The

/1 cont./

137 most important useful plants along the middle course of the Demini are the seringueiras (rubber trees -- Hevea brasiliensis Muell. Arg.), and along the Aracá and its tributaries the piaçaba palms (Attalea funifera Mart. and Leopoldinia piassaba Wal.). The chestnut forests that occur in the area around the mouth of the Demini and on the lower course of the Aracá also have economic significance. The chestnut, or more precisely, the chestnut of Pará (Bertholletia excelsa H.B.K. -- its fruits are known in Germany as Pará nuts), is regarded as the queen of the Amazonian primeval forests on account of its tall crown, with which it towers over all the other trees. On the lower Aracá the itaúba tree (Silvia itaüba Pax.) is of special importance because it furnishes the best lumber in that region. Finally, a few other species of trees and palms, which occur along the Demini as well as along the Aracá, should be mentioned:

a) Trees: imbauba (Cecropia palmata Wild.), angelin-amargoso (Andira vermifuga Mart.), macaranduba (Mimusops sp.), embireira (Anonaceae sp.), matamatazeiro (Eschweilera matamata Hub.), taxizeiro (Cesalpenaceae sp.), ingàzeiro (Inga sp.), abiurana (Lucuma sp.), cajueiro (Anacardium sp.), lucuma (Lucuma /2/ macrocarpa Hub.), wild cacao tree (Theobroma sp.), wild lemon tree (Rubiacea sp.), and cedars (Meliaceae sp.).

b) Palms: açaí (Euterpe oleracea Mart.), bacaba (Oenocarpus distichus Mart. or Oenocarpus bacaba Mart.), buriti (Mauritia vinifera Mart.), bucu (Manicaria saccifera Gaertn.), curua (Attalea spectabilis Mart.), inaja (Maximiliana regia Mart.), patauá (Oenocarpus bataua Mart.), paxiuba (Iriartea exorrhiza Mart.), pupunha (Guilielma speciosa Mart.), tucuma (Astrocaryum sp.), and ubim (Geonoma sp.).

• 133 The two rivers have many bends and during the summer months, October to March, flow relatively sluggishly. Their water level during this time is extremely low, so that numerous sandbanks [134] stand out. On the Demini the color of the sand is yellowish, whereas on the Aracá it is gleaming white. The average width of the Demini along its lower and middle course is 200-300 meters,

/2 cont./

133 that of the Aracá 300-400 meters. This may be why, on old maps, the Aracá is erroneously designated as the main river; the course of the Demini, however, is considerably longer. In the middle and upper courses of the aforementioned rivers there are rapids, the crossing of which often endangers life.

The area lying between the rivers represents one of those inselberg landscapes which are so characteristic for the region
133 of the middle and upper Rio Negro. Cone-, dome-, or ridge-
139 shaped granite mountains which individually or occasionally in groups rise up to 400 meters in the form of small massifs or short mountain chains offer a conspicuous contrast to the plain covered with dense primeval forest. Their relatively flat peaks and the gently sloping alluvial cones at the foot are likewise
133 densely forested. At the middle height, however, there appear steep, smooth granite walls looking fluted because of the many rain furrows.

Morphologically these elevations belong to a type which Passarge discusses in his Kalahari work (1) and elsewhere (2) and

1. Passarge, 1904a.

2. Passarge, 1904b.

which he has defined, following Bornhardt, as inselberge. These granite mountains in the Rio Negro region have already been strikingly described by Spruce (3). According to Brandt, who dealt

3. Spruce, 1908, p. 383.

in detail with the morphogenesis of isolated granite mountains, their cone-shaped appearance may be traced back to a "peeling process" of periclinal granite folds (4).

4. Brandt, 1917, pp. 52 ff.

2: Becher--266 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sutaia
Pakidai

/1/

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Ill. 1. Indian protection post "Ajuricaba" on the middle Rio Demini

2: Becher--267 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sutáta
Pakidái
/2/
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Ill. 2. Cachoeira (rapids) dos Índios on the upper Rio Aracá (during the dry season)

Ill. 3. Cachoeira dos Índios on the upper Rio Aracá (during the rainy season)

2: Becher--268 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Surára
Pakidái

/3/

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Ill. 4. Construction of family overnight quarters during migrations of the tribe

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Ill. 5. View of the large open Surára maloka in the region between the Demini and Aracá

/11/ Introduction

101 131 [133] The native tribes that are discussed in the present report inhabit the northwest zone of the Escudo Guayanés, located in the southern part of the Republic of Venezuela. As the natural boundaries of this region, which we call "the Orinoco-Ventuari region," one may point out the rivers: the Orinoco in the north and west; the Ventuari in the south, and the Caura in the east. Geographically the zone is enclosed between 64°-68°W. and 4°-8° N. approximately. The northern part of it corresponds to the Distrito Cedeño of Bolivar state, while the southern part, as Departamento Atures, belongs to the Territorio Federal Amazonas.

133 101 Hydrographically speaking, the region includes five river basins which carry off its water and which at the same time set off the various areas of native distribution (1).

[128] 1. We do not include here the small native groups who recently arrived (Guahibo, Piapoco, Puinave, Curipaco). They live along the periphery of the region, except the Guahibo, who advanced a few years ago to the Manapiare river.

a) The basin of the Cuara, with the Mayoncon /Maioncon/, a subgroup of the Makiritare, the Yecuana, and with some Sanemá groups;
b) The basin of the Cuchivero, with the Panare Indians and some unknown groups on the headwaters;
c) The basin of the Suapure, which, with the exception of some Panare nuclei, does not at the present time have any native populations;
d) The basin of the Sipapo, with the Piaroa and Macó Indians;
e) The basin of the Ventuari, with the Yabarana Indians on the Manapiare River, the Yecuana (Decuana) subtribe of the Makiritare, and the Nabudub, a Sanemá subgroup (cf. hydrographic map /see p.12/).

Guahibo SC14
Yabarana 5522
Panare 5521
Sanema
Saliva 5515
Makiritare 5520

/11 cont./

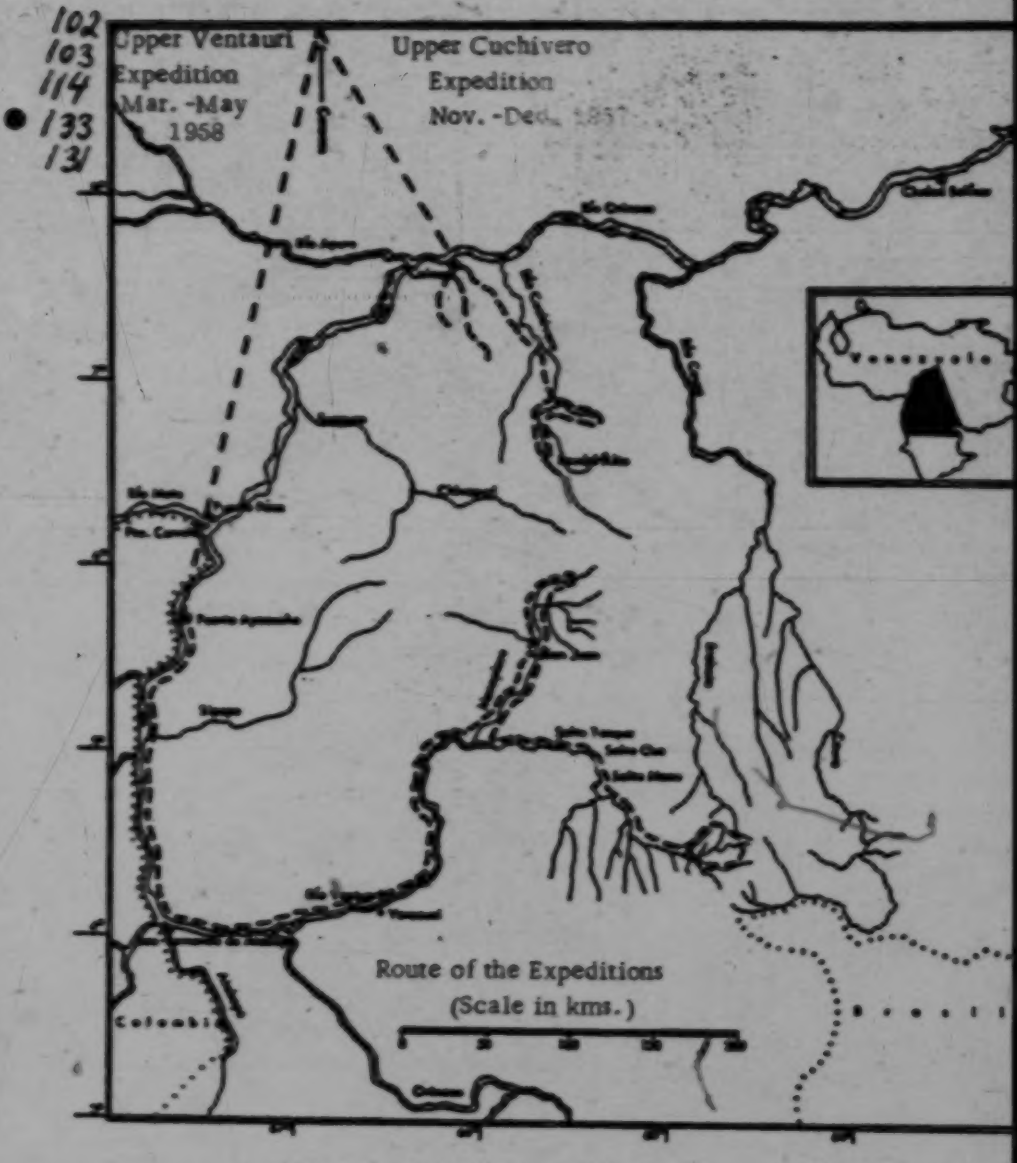
All these basins, without exception, pour their great volumes of water into the Orinoco, which, like a gigantic arc, runs across the north of the Escudo de Guayana, thus enclosing all the native tribes studied here and marking the farthermost boundary and end of their primitive world (cf. ethnic map /see p. 5 /). /12/ /Map appears here./

/13/ It is interesting to point out that the extensive fluvial network of the Orinoco-Ventuari zone does not serve the majority of the tribes as a means of communication or as an outstanding source of food. The Panare of the basin of the Cuchivero do not travel by river, and on the Cuchivero we found only one dugout /bongo/, which was used solely for crossing the river. In general the curiara /dugout canoe/ seems to be a foreign element in Panare culture, introduced recently by the Creoles. Nor did the Yabarana of the basin of the Ventuari use the curiara, and they recently learned from their neighbors, the Makiritare, the art of making them. For the Sanemá the river represents an obstacle rather than a means of communication, and they use rafts in order to cross it. At the present time, only the groups who live in symbiosis with the Makiritare make curiaras, but there is not the slightest doubt that this industry was adopted recently. The Sanemá spend less time at fishing than do the Panare, Yabarana, and Guahibo, since the latter too are among those Indians oriented toward the land, with its roads, rather than toward the rivers and navigation. The only real voyagers of the Orinoco-Ventuari zone are the Piaroa and the Makiritare, and the fame of the latter exceeds that of the former.

Culturally, the Makiritare belong to a Neo-Indian level, as do their cousins of the same linguistic affiliation, the Panare and the Yabarana. It is interesting, however, to call attention to the fact that to speak of Caribe /Carib/ Indians is not the same eo ipso as speaking of voyaging Indians. There are Neo-Indians who are ignorant of the curiara and who developed agriculture, not in a Meso-Indian culture (of fishermen and voyagers), but basically on top of a Paleo-Indian culture (of hunters). Meso-Indian cultures, such as that of the Warao, for example, and possibly that of the Piaroa, represent a specialization of the Paleo-American who was

[Text continues on P. 4]

4: Wilbert--3 E-4,5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema



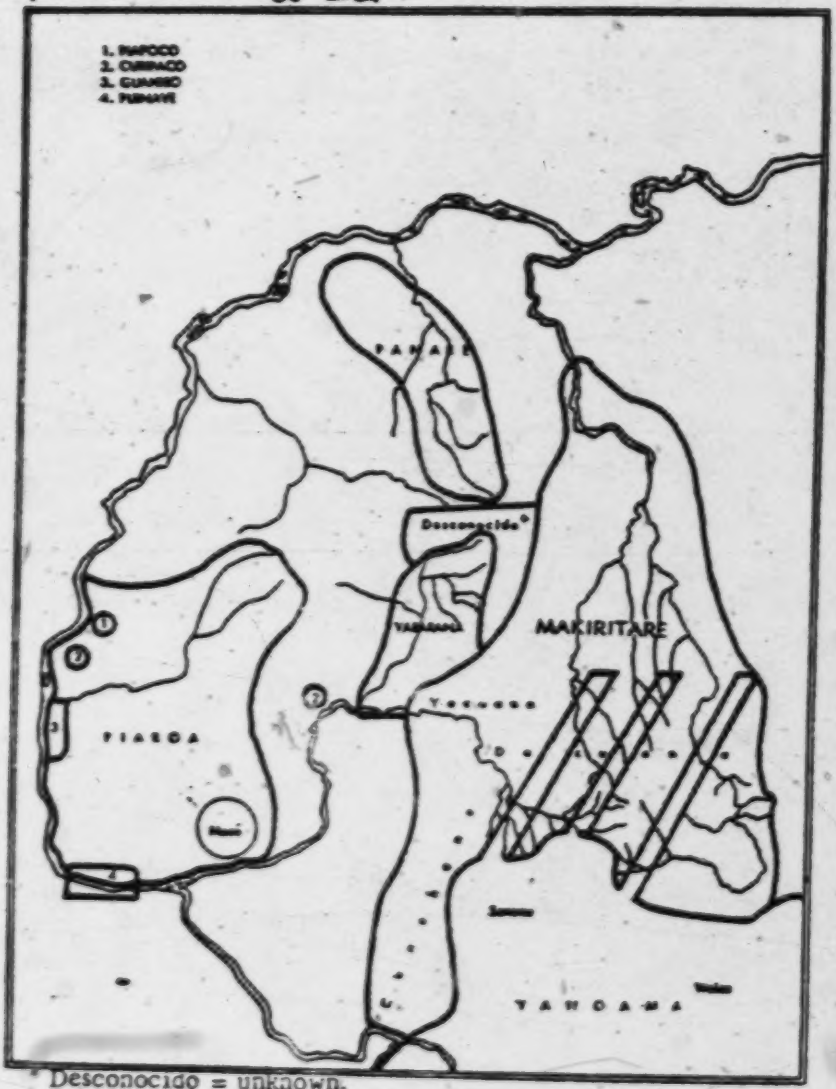
Map 1. Route of the expeditions.

4 Wilbert--5 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●

Achagua SC5
Saliva SS15
Panare SS21
Makiritare SS20
Yabarana SS22

Sanema
Puinave SC18
Barauna SQ27
Guahibo SC14

Ya Sanema Mya 101 102 133 ●



* Desconocido = unknown.

Map 2. Distribution of the native tribes of the Orinoco-Ventuari region.

Y /15 cont./
122 no case are more than three or four days needed in order to get
M to the site of study, and the cost is relatively low. The Waica
[122] and Samatari live in a remote corner of Venezuela. On a recent trip, however, we left Caracas at seven in the morning and were among the Waica of the Padamo at five o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. We spent five hours flying and three in a fast curiara.

On a reconnaissance trip of long duration, such as the one we made for this present report, one needs to go more slowly in a curiara, stopping among the tribes, streams, and mountains. The only zone difficult to reach is that of the "Monteros" and Chicano of the Sierra Guamapí.

Y The Orinoco-Ventuari region represents the secondary
• 133 western massif /macizo/ of the Macizo de Guayana, with eleva-
122 tions above 2,000 meters. The most difficult ascent in the region was the zone south of the Raudal Alto on the Cuchivero, toward the Sierra Guamapí, and the ford of the Salto Mono on the Upper Ventuari, where the level rises to more than 1,500 meters (cf. physical map /see p. 7 /). The traversing of the Salto Mono, particularly the ascent during the rainy season, is an extremely
M dangerous stretch, and one must spend at least a whole day to
[482] go and six hours to return. The Makiritare go up in six hours and
[482] come down in four hours with a load of 20-30 kilograms on their backs. We came down with 20 Sanemá and 30 Makiritare in only five hours, but such a marathon is extremely tiring. On the other hand, to cross the Mono in two days is an extraordinarily beautiful excursion because of the characteristics of this mountain and its gigantic forest, which at times allows an open view /16/ /map
M appears here/ /17/ and one can gaze on an enchanting panorama.
122 The Makiritare keep the wide path (over two meters) always open
[487] and in good repair, and at the upper port they built a house in
[485] which to rest and spend the night. There one finds curiaras with
[501] which one can follow the river to the Makiritare and Sanemá rancherías located on the headwaters of the same. From the port of Mono upriver as far as the headwaters there are no further obstacles for navigation, and the river permits easy access to all the Makiritare villages of the Upper Ventuari. We call Upper

[text continues on p. 8]

4: Wilbert--9 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●
Sanema
Venezuelan Indians
SS4
V
Y
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●133

0-200 m.

200-1000 m.

More than 1000 m.

Physical Map

Map 4. Physical map of the southern part of Venezuela (according to Vila, 1959).

4: Wilbert--12 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●
Sanema
Venezuelan Indians
554

V
Y
102
● 133

4; Wilbert--13 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema
Venezuelan Indians
SS4
V
102
133

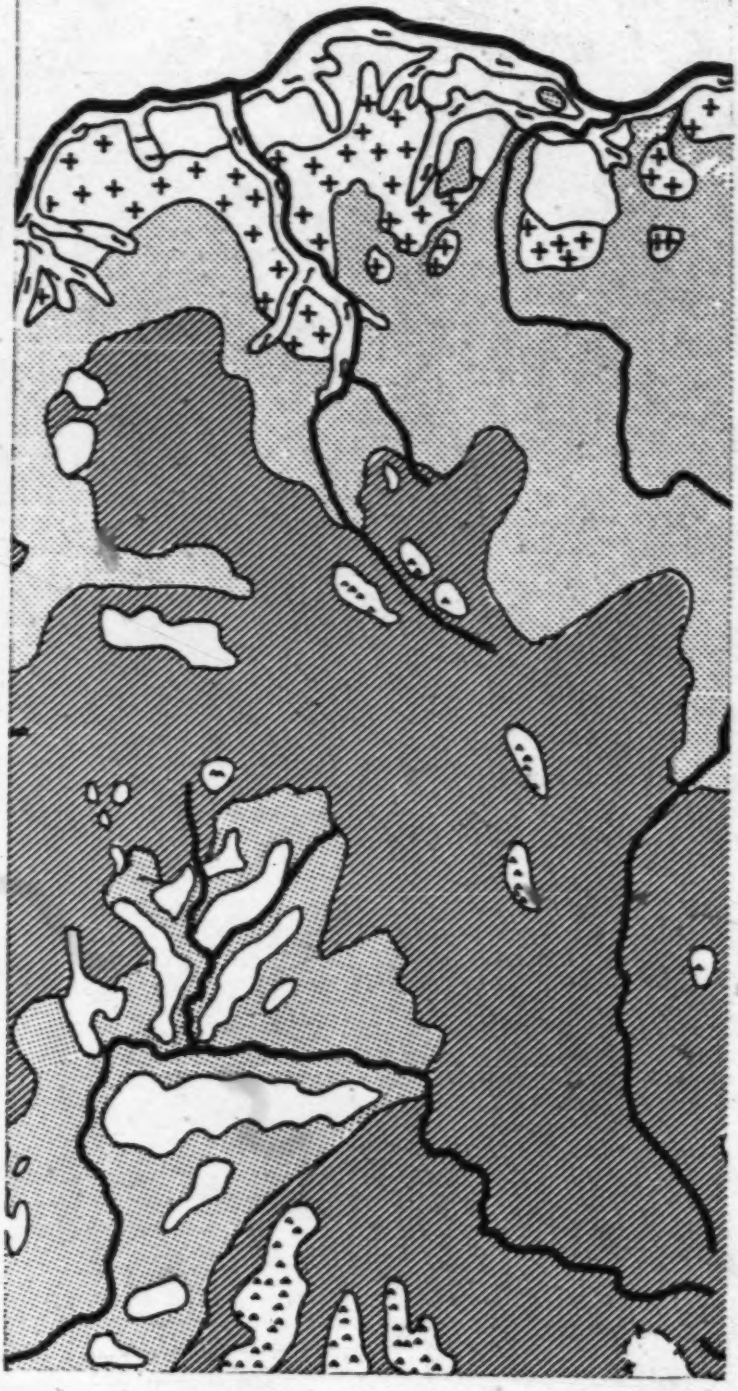
Map 5. Hydrographic map of the southern part of Venezuela (according to Vila, 1959).

Colombia

4; Wilbert--15 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●
Sanema

Venezuelan Indians SS4

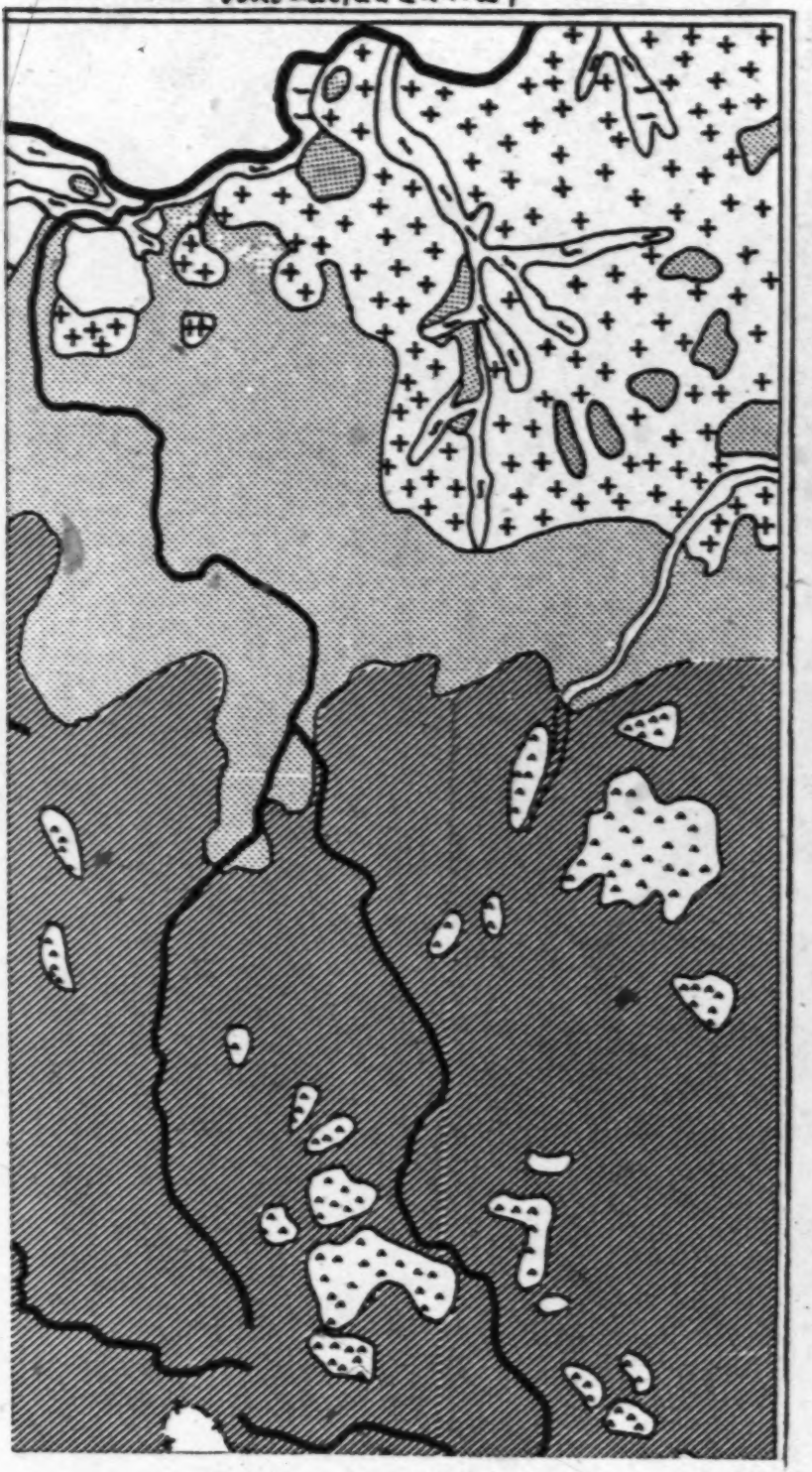
V
102
● 133
137



4: Wilbert--16 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●

Venezuelan Ind. 554 Sanema

V
Y
102
● 133
137



4: Wilbert

SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema
Venezuelan Indians 884

Y
V
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137

p. 14	p. 15	p. 16
p. 17	p. 18	p. 19

Chart of Positions of Map 6.
/facing Map 6/

4: Wilbert--17 E-4,5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●
Venezuelan Indians 554 Sanema
Y
V
102
● 133
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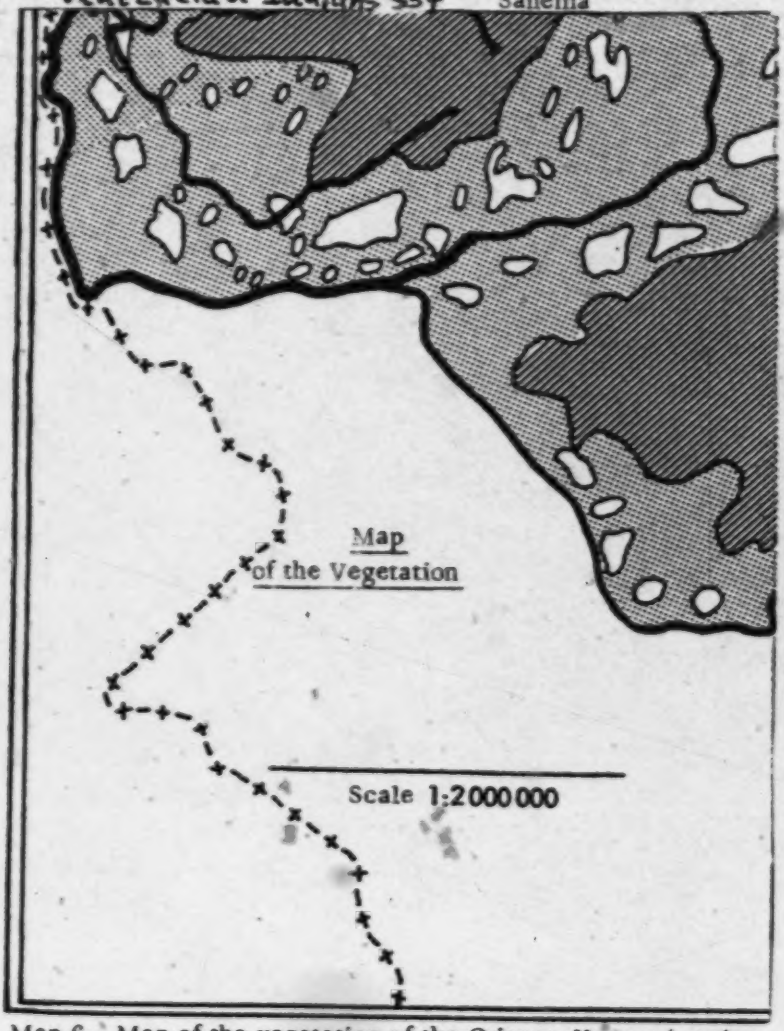

Map 6. Map of the vegetation of the Orinoco-Ventuari region (according to Hueck, 1960).

Chaparrals

Hygrophilous and mesophilous forests in the region of Guayanesa, locally interrupted by savannas

Mesophilous and hygrophilous deciduous forests, in part evergreen, of Guayana, in the low regions

Gramineous steppes of the upper Orinoco

4: Wilbert--18 E-4,5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●

Venezuelan Indians 554 Sanema

X
V
102
● 133
137

Steppes and savannas of the high sierras of Guayana

Gramineous steppes of the llanos, with other isolated woody elements

Gallery forests, marked only in dry regions

4: Wilbert--19 E-4,5 (1958) 1962 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Venezuelan Indians SS4 Sanema
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V
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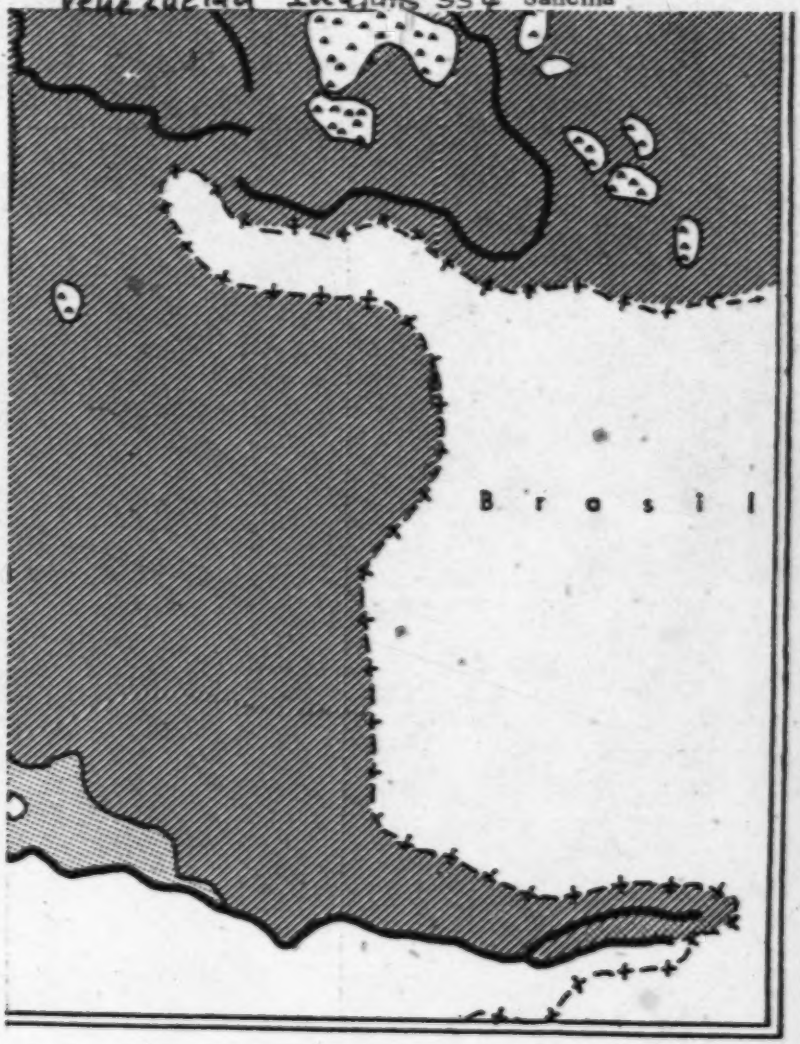

Steppes and savannas of the high sierras of Guayana

Gramineous steppes of the llanos, with other isolated woody elements

Gallery forests, marked only in the dry regions

4: Wilbert--21 E-4,5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

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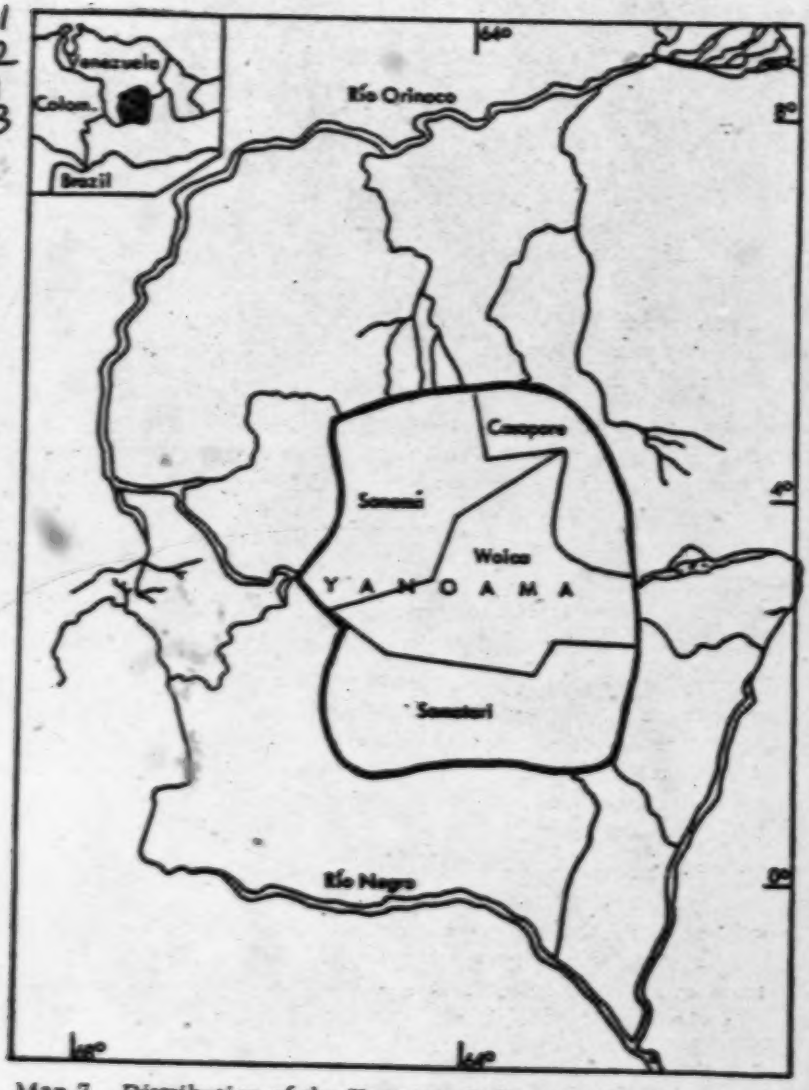

Map 7. Distribution of the Yanoama Indians (preliminary).

4: Wilbert
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SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●
Makiritare SS20

p. 40	p. 41
p. 42	p. 43

Chart of Positions of Tribal Distribution Map (foldout). /facing p. 39/

4: Wilbert--40 E-4,5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●
Sanama
Makiritare SS20

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Y
102
103
131
●133
361

4: Wilbert--41 E-4.5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●

Makoritare SS20 Sanema

M
Y
102
103
131
● 133
161

4: Wilbert--42 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●
Makiritare SS 2 ● Sanema

M
Y
102
103
131
● 133
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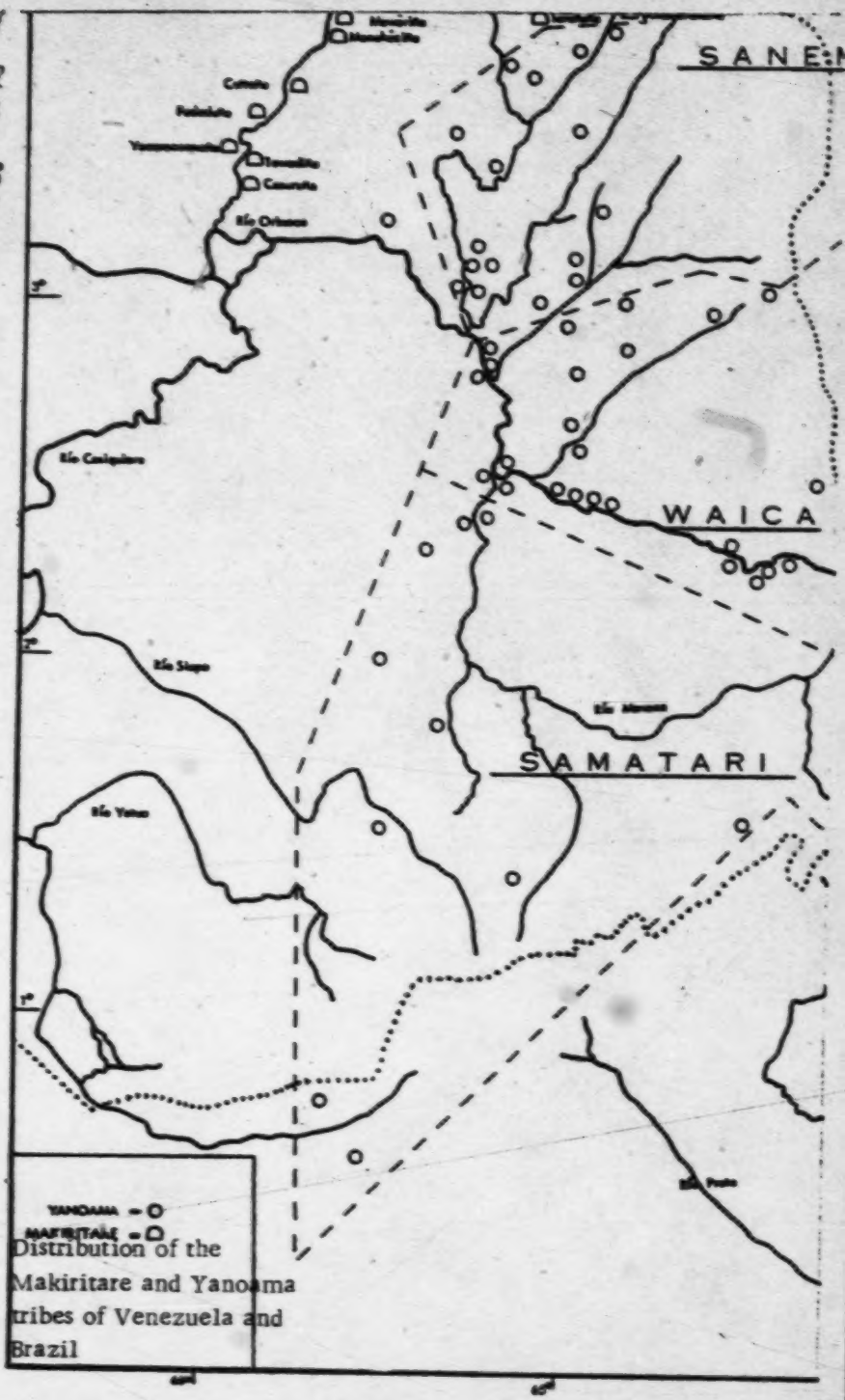

Distribution of the Makiritare and Yanoama tribes of Venezuela and Brazil

4: Wilbert--43 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18 ●

Sanema

Makiritare SS 20

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● 133
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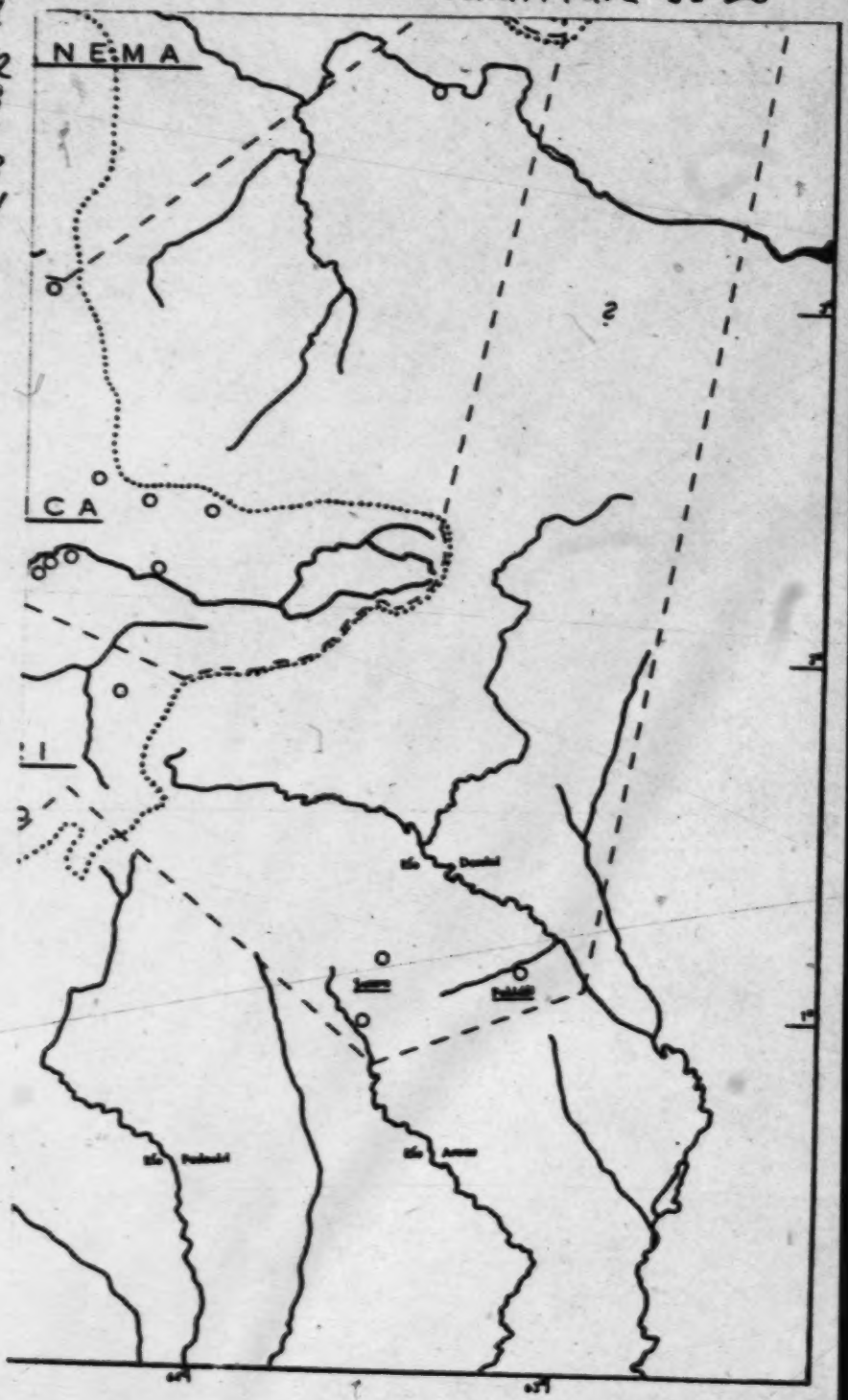

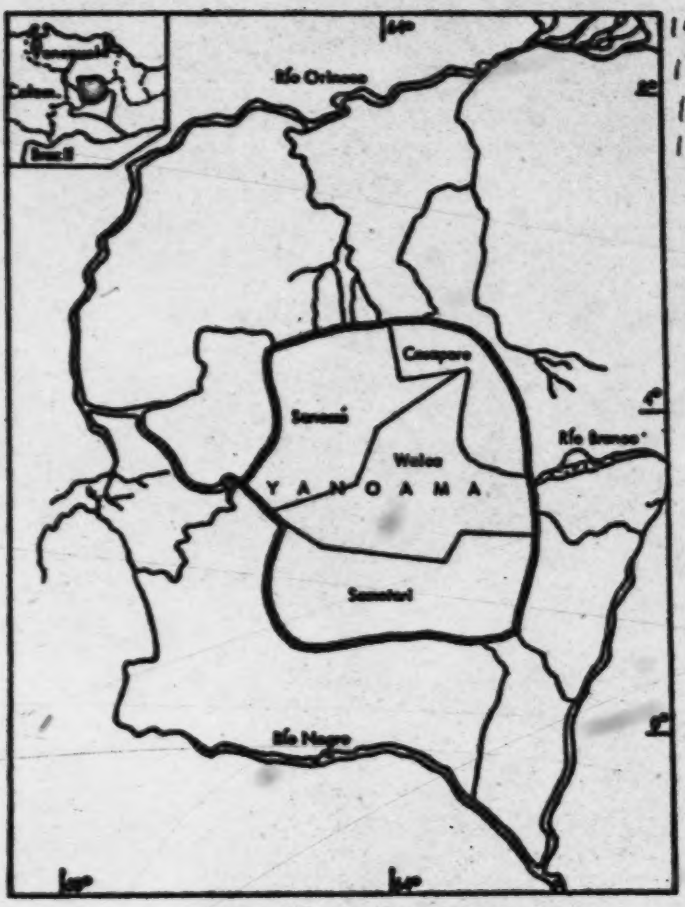

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FIG. 1. Preliminary map of Yanoama distribution. (Wilbert, 1961b).

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

screaming loudly and the *Pirata* making no headway at all. She only reared and plunged, and we began to ship water. We should have to go back—a highly delicate operation. Huge rocks prevented us from getting to a quieter reach on our left. Manuera had turned pale and was working away furiously with his paddle to get the craft in nearer the bank. In the end we found a patch of slack water and were able to jump in and drag the boat on to a gravel bank. She was full of water by now and we did some hasty baling with a bucket. Even Manuera had seen the light: he knew now that the Caura and its rapids are stronger than any man-made motors, and that the world of the great forest is still stronger than the world of work.

Alas, the rapids very soon had their full revenge, just as we were hauling the two boats into another arm of the river where the water tumbled more steeply down, but with less force. The *Pirata* was already through and in safety higher up. The *Rumbera* too was successfully over the first bad patch, and Giovanni was running along the rocks to take the cable to Momi, who was further on. Artur was still on board, probably because he wanted a ride and didn't feel like taking a bath. While Giovanni was jumping from one rock to another the rope slipped out of his grasp, and being greasy slid away over the rocks. The current swung the boat round and she began to go downstream sideways, with a sort of violent skipping motion. She struck on a rocky shelf and shipped some water. The motor, its arm now raised, hit against a boulder and broke off at the clamp, plunging straight into the river. Artur hadn't moved: but he was looking round wildly. After a few more hair-raising turns the boat finished up rocking in a patch of dead water, and that was the end of the adventure. The motor was at the bottom of the deepest pocket on the Caura, and its future would be limited to the process of gradual chemical dissolution. We continued on our way with the *Rumbera* in tow. But our greatest loss was not the outboard engine. It was the good humour and the carefree spirits of Manuera himself.

XI

In the neighbourhood of the Canaracuni the great mountains had already begun again: ahead of us the Uana-Coco and to the left, the Araua range presented their high grey sandstone walls, patterned with the white stripes of the cascades. Neither the Makiritari nor the Shirians fear the Magnaritón, and no

[pp. 27-40 not processed]

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

one gave a thought to these peaks that towered higher with every bend of the river. Then one afternoon, after a storm, they dropped out of sight, and we realized that we had entered a different region. Manuera pointed leftwards, to the mouth of a small river whose water was yellow.

'Pulipuli. Nuna,' he told us—Nuna being the Shirian and Makiritari pronunciation of 'Luna'. 'There is my home, the home of the Shirians.'

We swung into the mouth of the Luna and tied up under a tall clay bank among a few ill-made canoes—if you could call them canoes, for they looked more like rotten tree-trunks swept on to the little landing-beach in the course of some sudden flood.

Our arrival in the dirty waters of the Luna was a signal for swift and secret flight on the part of the population. Some Shirian youngsters had been hunting a capybara which the throb of our motor scared off. The boys, no less scared than the animal, ran to hide in the nearby huts, spreading the wondrous news that men had come with beards and an engine.

The Moon Valley people occupy a fair-sized wedge of territory in the forests between the Lower Canaracuni and the Caura. Their little huts are sorry imitations of the big Makiritari erections, and they have burned out big patches of forest for the sowing of manioc and bananas. All this is the work of the last twenty years. Not till then did the tribes of the Shirian borderland grow weary of their nomad life, their wars and their plundering expeditions, and decide to set up house and home. Pulipuli became a sort of agricultural centre for the groups living on the Upper Caura, or on the Merehuari and its tributary streams as far as the great mountain saddle between Uana-Coco, Canaua, and Uagna. These people here were therefore the most advanced of the Shirians, not only in a geographical sense but also in their culture. Their numbers were continually increasing because they had a magnetic attraction for neighbouring tribes who were still mere primitive forest hunters.

Manuera had married a Pulipuli girl and then joined her tribe. 'Let us build a fine house,' he had told her, 'and I'll come and live with you. I'll bring good manioc and banana roots. We'll plant a big patch, in the proper way we Makiritaris know, and there'll be no lack of food. You Shirians are for ever as hungry as beasts and I can't stomach the worms you eat.'

There was great puzzlement among the old Shirians—those whose hairless heads showed the marks of so many battles and so many robbing and plundering expeditions all through the valley and the Merehuari cordillera as far as the

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema
Makiritare SS20

A little above Pulipuli we came to a large stream of clear, coffee-coloured water: the Canaracuni.

We slept in a sound Makiritari hut near the confluence of the two rivers that night, and the next day found us at the foot of some powerful rapids. To get up through these was a tricky business, calling for a highly specialized technique beyond our experience. We had had some eventful hours even before we reached this point, and a hilarious progress, for at every bend in the river we had encountered whole boatfuls of Indians, both Shirians and Makiritari, who mobbed us and wanted to clamber on board. The delights of an outboard engine were more than they could resist! And so it happened that at one time we counted twenty-eight of them, squatting and lying about all over our baggage. It was a heady thought that all this crowd was proceeding up the swift brown waters of the Canaracuni by virtue of one motor!

When we got to the Kumpakà rapids, as they were apparently called, Manuera tried to make us understand, by the aid of his sweeping gestures, the manœuvres which were called for. We couldn't follow, but next morning the difficulty resolved itself. There came into view, in startling silence, a big canoe of fine workmanship paddled by a number of athletic-looking Makiritari who had the air of being very sure of themselves. Amidships there sat an old fellow who in addition to his loincloth was wearing a dirty shirt, and with him another old man of more modest bearing, one or two women, and some children and dogs, all mixed up together in a silent huddle. The steersman was a thin and very ugly customer with only one eye, dressed in trousers and shirt. Our camp was struck dumb at the sight. It was like watching some religious ceremony. The modest-looking old man—in point of fact it was Benito, the owner of the Ceiba property—addressed Momi in passable Spanish, asking him if he was the chief. Momi gestured towards me, and the old fellow turned to me at once, saying:

'Here, Chief Pancho—Makiritari Chief.'

Only later did we discover that Pancho was the one with the squint, not the old man in the shirt: the latter had been chief in his time, but had now handed the sceptre to his son.

Pancho spoke no Spanish, but somehow or other he had picked up exactly seven words of second-hand Portuguese: they dated from a trip to Boa Vista some few years back. Pancho could say: *tarabalo*, *bom*, *dia*, *filio*, *magnà*, *agua*, and *matto*. That is, work, good, day, son, tomorrow, water, and forest. And he

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
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certainly knew how to command the Indians; all of them, Shirians and Makiritari, held him in respect and did his bidding without question. He would lie in his hammock, with the watchful dogs lying underneath, in a kind of thoughtful somnolence. Then all at once he would sit up and call all the men, in a voice with a strident edge to it, and set them to work. He altered his tone of voice according to whether he was dealing with his own people or with the Shirians. For the latter he reserved a range of almost animal cries. You would have thought he was trying to rouse a herd of pigs.

We put our trust in him and his renown, and three days later, hardly believing our eyes, we came out on to the Kirisochi savannah to see in front of us the dramatic rocky walls of the rosy Sarisariñama mountains. It was December 25th. Our trip from La Paragua to the Upper Canaracuni had lasted pretty well two months.

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

broth with a strong tang. Little Sempronio was the cook—Sempronio with the small eyes and fierce, sharp teeth, ever ready to crunch anything edible there was to be found. We didn't worry too much about hygiene, because out in the blue it is hardly practical. Nor did we dwell on the question of Indian tastes in meat: they prefer the intestines and all the peculiar parts, to the flesh. Enrico and I, up on the Gran Sabana, had once lived for months at a time on monkeys and even worse things, and we weren't squeamish. But while Artur was fastidiously eating his helping of monkey-meat, his face contorted with disgust and he opened his mouth to let fall a little black thing, half chewed. This proved upon examination to be a real Shirian titbit, but Artur said a good many things with exclamation marks, ending up with: 'I'd never have believed that things would come to this.'

'Nor would the monkey,' I replied philosophically, while Sempronio retrieved the mouthful and it disappeared with a strong sucking noise, as if he was taking a drink.

When we had finished our meal of monkey, Luis Antonio and his brothers sang some Shirian airs, with a grace and phrasing that surprised us. We soon joined in with our own renderings: a deep chorus echoed through the mountain gorges. Then, for something to do, we chopped down some trees which fell with a huge crashing tumult. Luis Antonio took his axe and heroically tackled a giant *guaramán*, and four hours later a vast mass of wood toppled down, bringing with it in its thunderous fall other trees fifty or sixty yards away. But The 24 ants, rudely disturbed, poured ferociously out of their nests, making us flee to our hammocks, where we lay waiting for the night.

Before we tackled the higher part of the climb (where the way led steeply upwards between treeless slopes and vertical sandstone cliffs) we set fire to the undergrowth. This is a means of clearing the crevices between rocks, and makes for an easier ascent. We waited one day after the fire, and then set out. Halfway through the climb we found ourselves black as chimney-sweeps—thanks to the ash and charcoal which covered our path. It was easier going than we'd reckoned on, and soon after midday we were all on the summit—all of us with the exception of Artur, who had found the pace too hot for him.

The Sarisariñama heights form part of the vast system of table-topped mountains (or sierra) which rise in isolated massifs over the whole region bounded by the Rio Negro, the Rio Branco, the Atlantic, and the Orinoco and known geographically as Guiana. These mountains tower up suddenly from

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[illegible]

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

especially strong and intelligent, and keep him at his side, adopting him, as it were, as his successor. The little girls continue to live in the feminine world of their tribe. Shy and submissive, they take on the humblest tasks, fetching water, making the fire and helping in the preparation—highly problematical—of food.

Such definitions of customs have, however, only a relative value, like any attempt to estimate the Shirian way of life: for Shirians are to be found spread over wild territory of vast extent. Their customs are less well defined than one might suppose after reading certain tracts about primitive peoples—the Pacific islanders, for instance. These give the impression that with slight formal changes only, Western culture might have much to learn from the degree of social organization they have attained to. The Shirian tribes, cut off from one another as they are by physical barriers such as mountains and rivers, and moral barriers like the ceaseless state of war which exists between the various branches of this race of 'howling Indians', have developed their own customs in their own sporadic fashion. Sometimes they have been weakened by contact with foreigners, such as the Makiritari in the north-west and the Makushi in the east. More often they have been weakened by a lack of strong traditions, which do not spring easily from such an excessively low level of culture, where mere survival calls for an unending struggle against the tremendous power of the eternally hostile forest.

The most primitive races are those most affected by their geographical setting. Their environment conditions them. Only by adapting themselves continually to their surroundings, only by the long process of response to the determining factor of geography, can they create that growing racial identity which at last succeeds in reversing the process—that is, in conditioning the surroundings instead of being conditioned by them. But we are here touching on the larger question of the development of civilization generally.

Where the Shirians are concerned, we are still at the beginning of the beginning, when geography is the absolute determining factor. Here environment is the master of man—a creature inferior, qualitatively and quantitatively, to the region which it is his fate to inhabit.

The territory they occupy is immense. Divided though it may be by great cordilleras, which make it the breeding ground for various rivers rushing north, west and south, it possesses one marked characteristic throughout its whole extent: the sources and the headwaters of the rivers are contained in a sort of

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

island of unbroken forest, which is not crossed by any formidable water barrier. If this were the case, the Shirians, who are pre-eminently a land people, would be presented with an insurmountable obstacle.

North of the Brazilian frontier live the Shirians of the Canaracuni and the Merevari. These are divided into various clans, the most important being the Uana-Dildep, the Haruao, the Oskadeli, the Kopali, the Hana-Dildep, the Ukumatari, the Kona-Kona—they swarm like ants. Then there are the Guayca Shirians of Uarema, lately established on the Merevari, but originally from the Upper Uagna. Along the mountain watershed which extends, with frequent interruptions, from the Uagna to the centre of the highlands where the Uraricoera, the Ventuari and the Padamo rivers rise, one encounters the nomadic Samatari—the 'people of the pineapple'—a fierce and savage race of howling creatures that run in packs like animals.

The general term used by the Shirians to designate their most savage tribes is 'Guayca' (in their language, 'wild'). By the Guayca they sometimes mean the Samatari and sometimes the Ukumatari. On the Padamo and in the lowlands enclosed by the great mountains of Marahuaca and Duida—that is, to the south of the central ridge—they have spread right beyond the upper reaches of the Orinoco: though in these regions there are also many of the more peaceful Shirian peoples such as the Uaka on the Uesete, the Faricete, the Matacuni, the Kologli, the Haue, and the Ish'tich—the 'people of flowers and bananas'. The Guayca and the Samatari are also to be found east of the Padamo-Orinoco-Rio Parima watershed, in the wildest and least-known territory. Isolated groups, with a touch of the legendary about them, inhabit the fringe of this region: for instance, the Kasarape, credited by all Shirians with unparalleled ferocity and cruelty. The Kasarape inhabit the right bank of the Lower Uraricoera in Brazil, and no traveller appears to have visited them yet.

How numerous are the Shirians? No one can state a figure with any certainty, but it may be accepted that they run into many thousands, and taken together represent a block that outnumbers all other races and tribes inhabiting the Orinoco and Rio Branco basin.

I had asked Luis Antonio whether it would be possible for me to be present during the confinement of his kinswoman, presuming the happy event took place during our stay, but all I got for an answer was a doubtful 'I don't know' —the formula in which the Indian takes refuge when he does not know what to say. This did not quite deny the possibility, even if it did not encourage the

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
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few days later my hand was completely healed, even though the tendons had been severed and the fingers partially paralysed.

Some antibiotic substance must surely be produced in great quantities in the soil of the dank forest regions: while in the grasslands the cycle of growth is altered owing to the effect of the sun's direct rays, which either destroy the culture or impede its development.

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The most dangerous diseases are those which attack the young children and are naturally reflected in their mothers, too. Intestinal worms are the scourge of primitive populations and I have constantly observed that while among the Makiritari they affect the grown men as well, among the more primitive Shirians they are limited exclusively to the women and children, whose bellies are often swollen to an enormous size. Many of the children die at an early age from this, and from colics, intestinal obstruction, and suffocation.

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Indians don't live long, even if they manage to survive the dangers that beset them in their early years. Like all primitive races, they develop precociously—the girls reaching womanhood at ten—and old age descends quickly upon them, their bodies being worn out by hard work, exposure to the extremes of weather, and anchylosis. Ancients are few and far between in any tribe: not more than one or two among some scores of men and women. The Indians whom we usually call old are not, in most cases, much more than forty.

In spite of this I have always believed in the existence of some super-ancient, some Methuselah of the Forest, an altogether exceptional individual whose organism has battled with and overcome every ill, achieving a high degree of immunity and resistance, and living on indefinitely. Certain experiences of mine with tribes of various races have led me to this conclusion.

IV

123* [133]

The Aracoa is a river of white water flowing over a bed of large granite stones. Near its mouth are huge falls where it pours over a solid sandstone shelf on its way to join the even clearer waters of the Uaraticoera, a little above the confluence of its sister stream the Quadu.

After a descent lasting several days, we were in camp on this sandstone shelf, with the roar of the falls in our ears, enjoying a feast of sunshine that everyone seemed to appreciate. Our chief preoccupations were the louse and the

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6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
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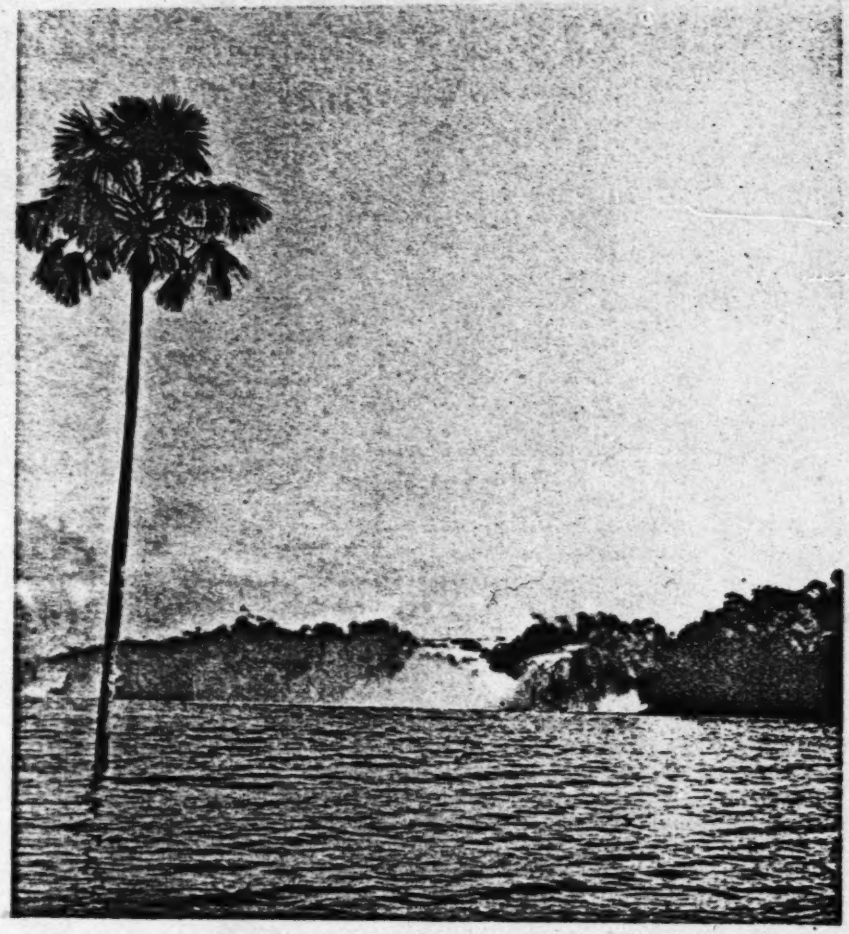

22. *The great Cassima Falls.*

[p. 144-A]

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

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24. *Carmine undergoes anatomical inspection at Shyrian hands.*

[p. 144-C]

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
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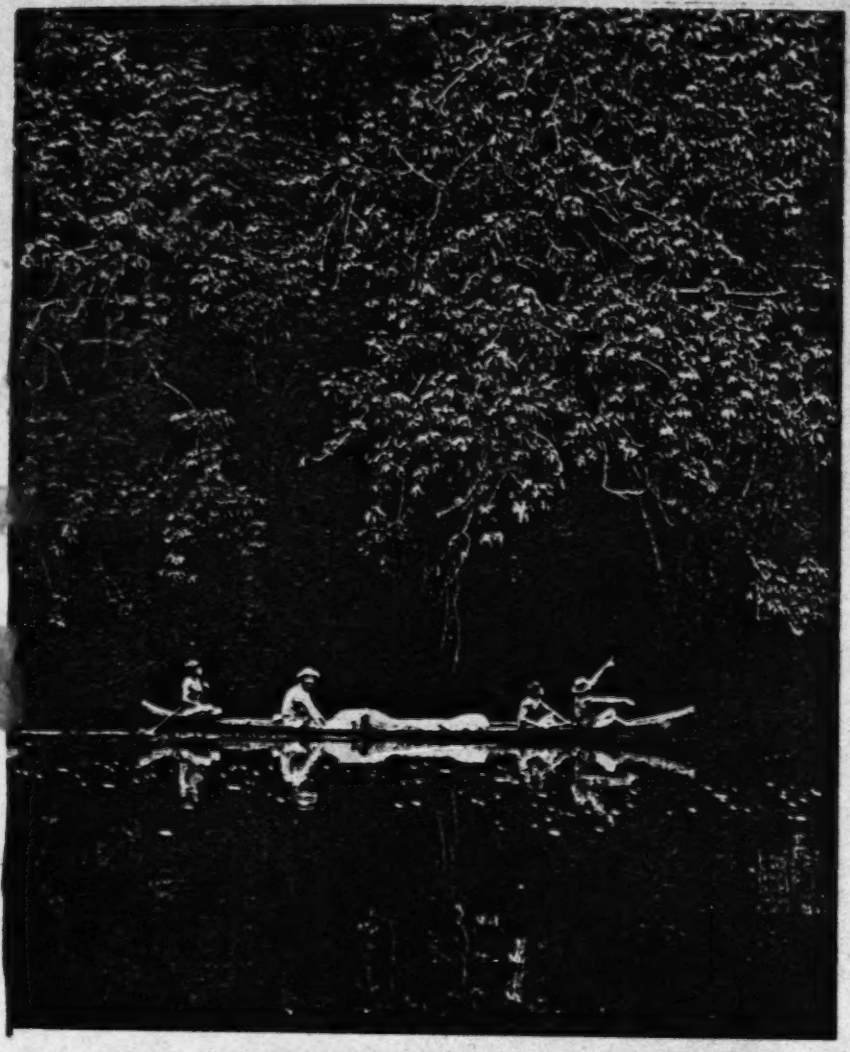

26. *The Mavaari is quiet enough in its upper reaches.*

[p. 144 -E]

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

who are always capable of taking it into their heads to walk out just when the expedition has reached the most dangerous point in the whole forest.

Among races less advanced than our own, it is memory, rather than intelligence, that is defective. Indians forget very quickly indeed. Two hours later, Luis Antonio asked for the gun so that he could go and get something for the pot. We still had three cartridges, and the river-bank, at night, is the haunt of a good many unsuspecting animals. I gave him the gun, and the three shots went on a lapa. The beast was far from cleanly killed, but its arrival was providential. It weighed over twenty pounds. We cooked it and ate it that same night, before dawn.

Going down the Mereyari in the sunshine was a most pleasant experience and brightened our spirits considerably. When we came to broken water, Solituan, who was just a 'passenger' with no paddle, held back the water with his hands. We tried not to smile: the old fellow was a reclaimed Samatari, a fine type, and we were very fond of him. He still looked on us as superhuman beings and delighted in our physical presence. One or twice, when he thought we weren't looking, we saw him eyeing us with admiration, and expressing it in little guttural grunts.

A few hours above Llantariña there are some big rapids where the river takes one roaring plunge down over a granite shelf, while to the left a side-stream makes its way more quietly through a rocky channel where the current is extremely swift but without any sudden falls. Uarema irritably made up his mind: after inspecting both ways of getting down, he decided on the secondary channel, claiming that he and his brother had shot it on one occasion. We disembarked and went down to the foot of the rapids where the rushing waters were swallowed up with a dull rumbling noise in a wide pool of whirling foam. Here we waited for our more daring companions.

Now, as never before, we cursed the accident to our cine-camera. We had no chance of filming that hair-raising descent. The canoe looked quite insignificant at first, up there on the lip of the falls. Then it came on as if it was flying, growing larger with every split second. Halfway down, with Uarema and Hashimo howling in imitation of the Makiritari on similar crazy ventures, the craft began to swing round till it was broadside on to the stream. We gave it up for lost, but as it swept on it glanced past a small rock and righted itself again, bows forward. Seizing their opportunity immediately, the two Indians

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Tanzania SQ18
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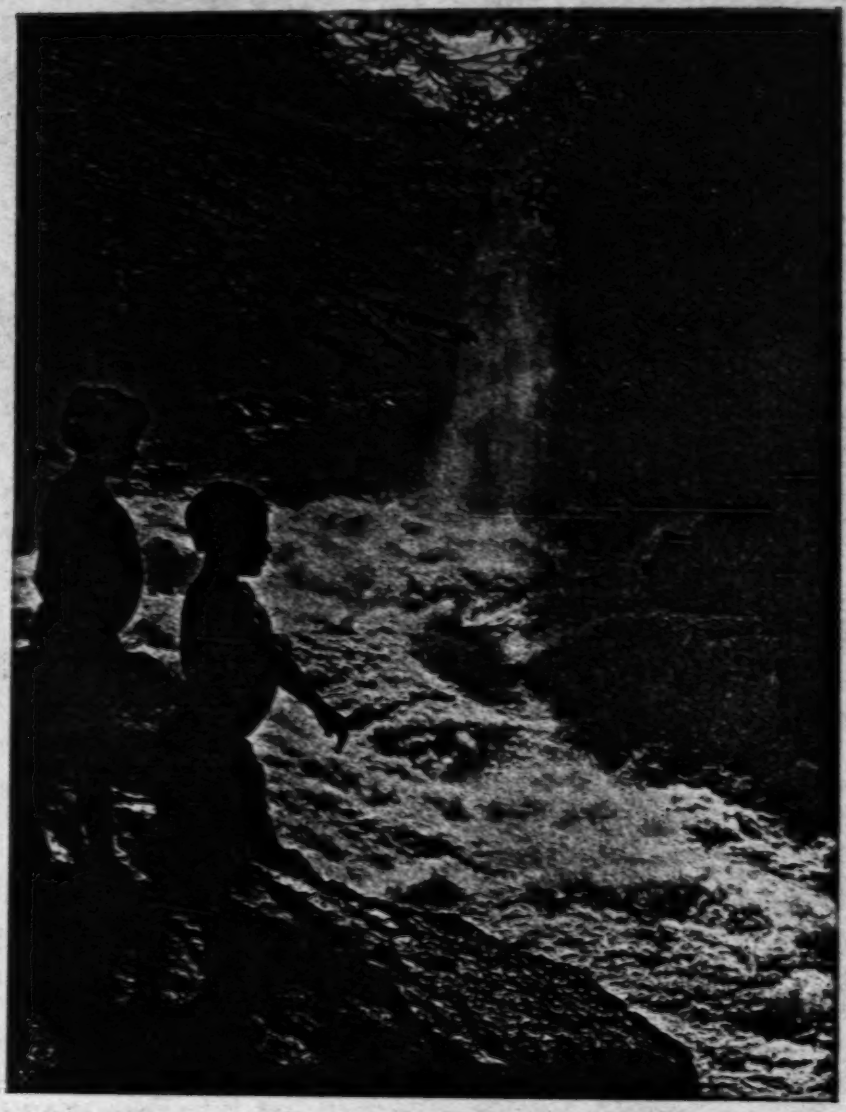
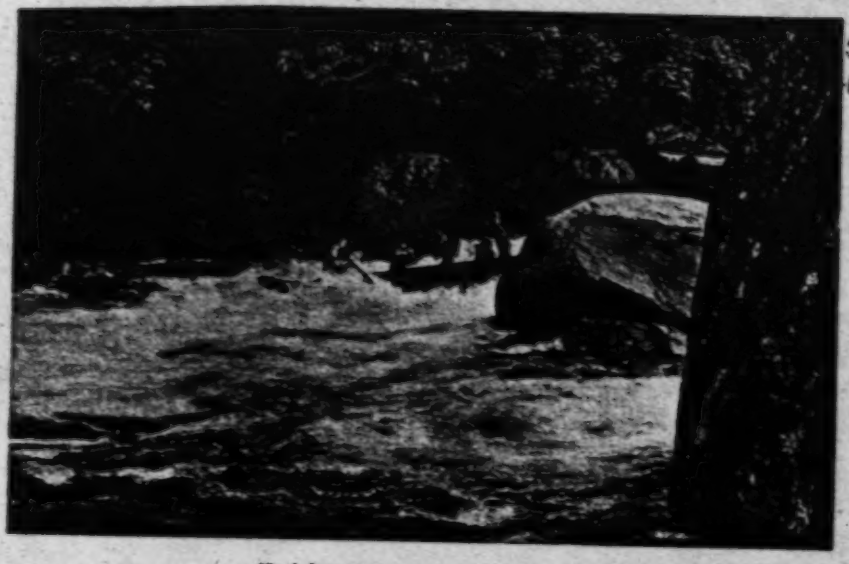


46. *The Mona Falls.*

[p. 192-E]

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema



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48. *A dramatic moment on the Venturi.*

49. *The end of the rapids.*

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[b. 192 - G]

/436 cont./

132 The rains at El Platanal are copious, and there is no true dry season there. There is never a day when one can feel safe from rain if he does not have a roof over him. The longest dry period which I have heard of was ten /maps appear here/ /437/ days. Droughts are so unknown that nobody thinks about the fact that rain is necessary for the crops. In El Platanal, almost all of the winds and the rainstorms come from the east.

137 The basin of the Upper Orinoco is covered by a tropical forest. Above the savanna at La Esmeralda, meadows are virtually nonexistent. There is one hillside on the north bank of the Upper Ocama which is covered with grass, but aside from this, and a few rocky slopes where not even grass grows, the tree cover is practically uninterrupted, with the exception of the clearings opened by the currents of water and the hand of man.

● 133 If one climbs the hill at El Platanal on a clear day, he will see an extensive plain toward the north. On the northwestern horizon rise the distant peaks of Duida and Marahuaca. These seem to blend into the even more distant montañas of the Upper Padamo and the Ventuari River farther to the north. Following these mountains toward the east with the eyes, one almost believes that he can make out the boundaries of Brazil from the headwaters of the Ventuari River down to the headwaters of the Ocamo. Then, looking toward the east, one can see the entire area between the Ocamo and Orinoco rivers; full of mountains which are not very high, but which are impressive because they are no near. But the north and northwest of Platanal between the Ocamo and Orinoco rivers is the part nearest to the plain described above.

Toward the south there is a narrow plain along the Orinoco River, then hills which are combined with the mountains of the headwaters of the Orinoco to the east and the mountains of the Upper Mavaca to the south. Then, looking toward the southwest and the west, there is the extensive plain of the Mavaca River, interrupted only by a few isolated mountains. Beyond this plain are the mountain ranges which, beginning at the headwaters of the Mavaca, extend toward the west and then toward the north, almost as far as the Orinoco itself.

7: Barker--6 M-5 (ca. 1951-1953) 1953 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Waica

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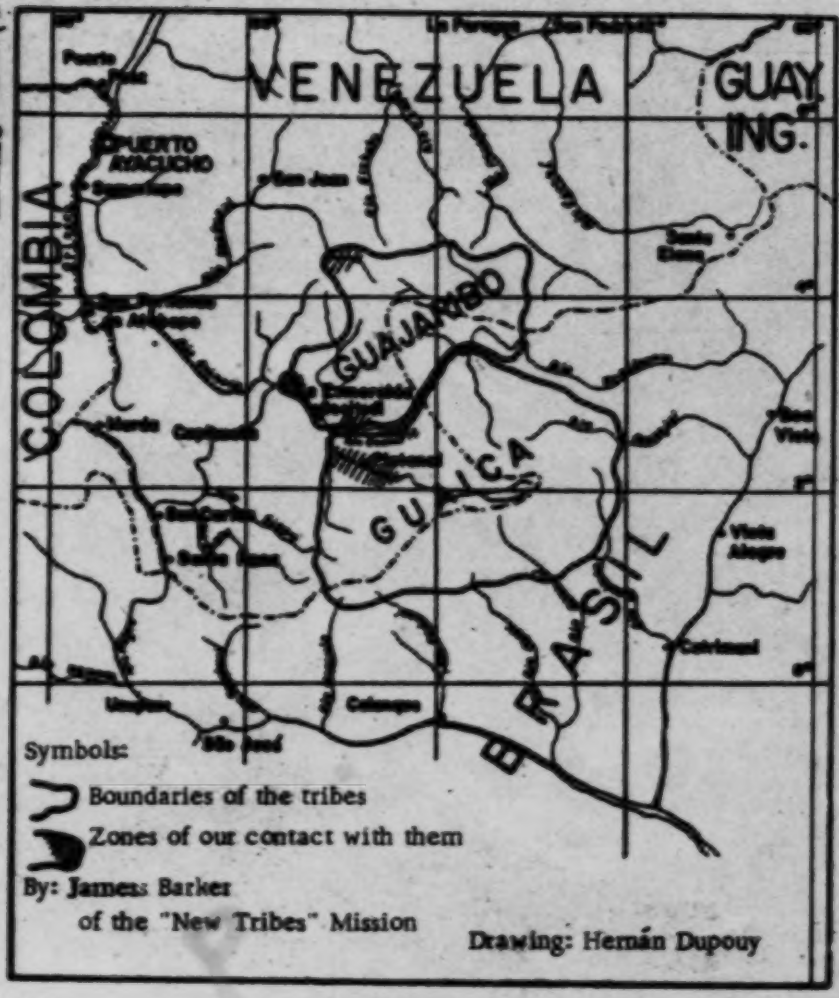

7: Barker--7 M-5 (ca. 1951-1953) 1953 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Waica
Guaharibo

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103
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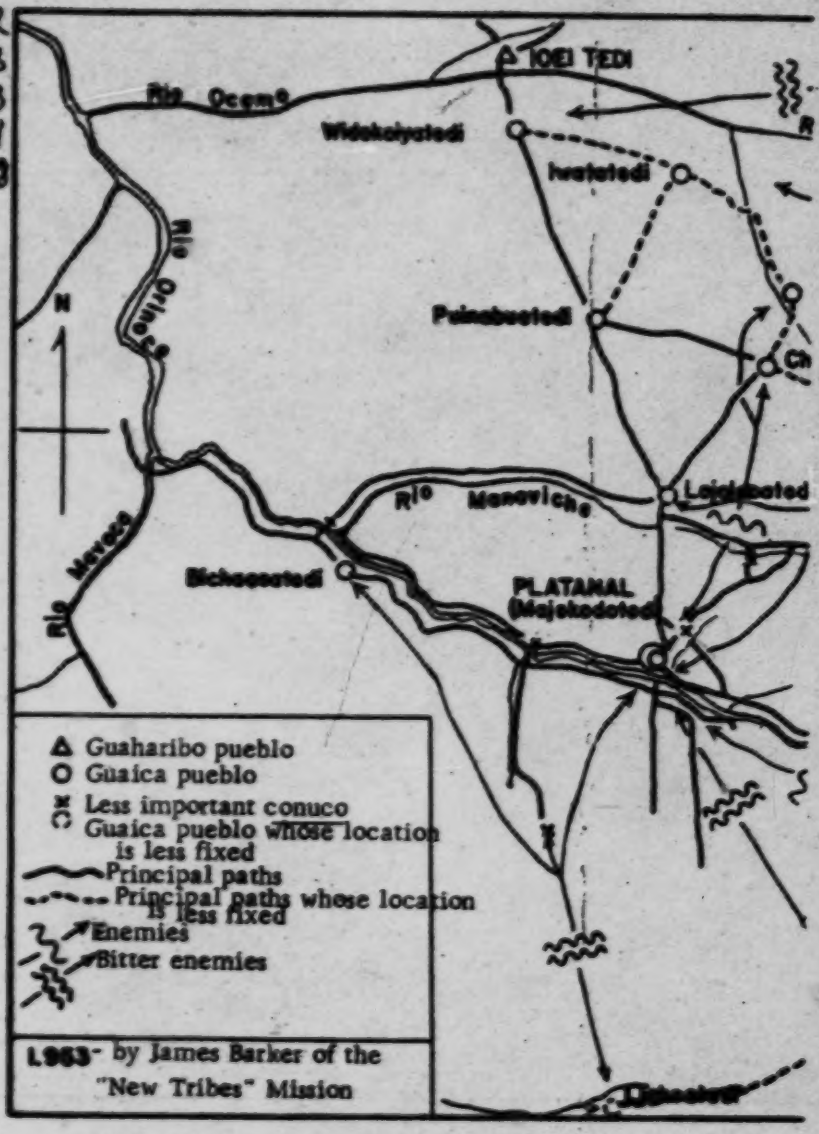
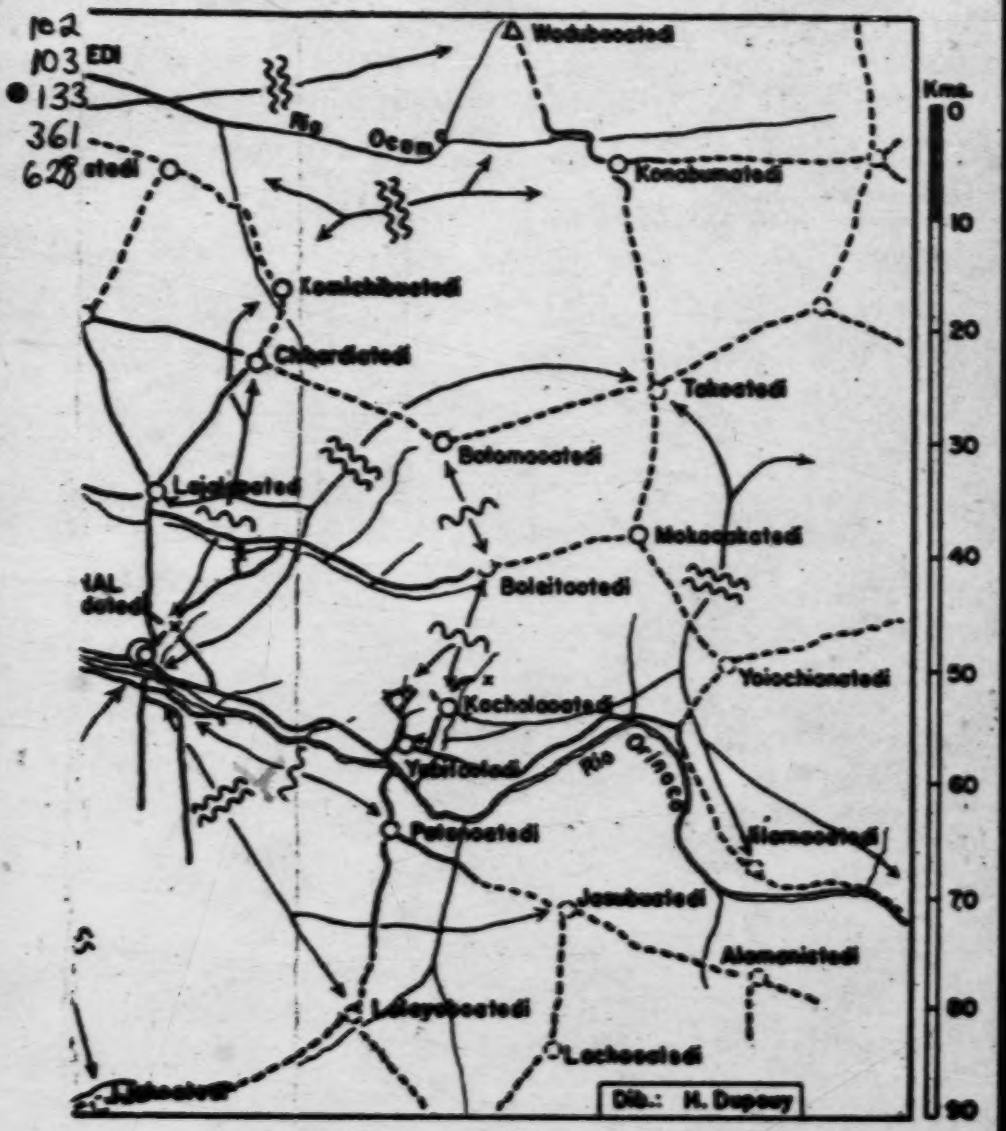


7: Barker--8 M-5 (ca. 1951-1953) 1953 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

Waica
Guaharibo



/Drawing: H. Dupouy/

9:Grolier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18

● 133

Cerro Yapacana dominates the river from a distance of almost a mile. (*Photograph by J. Grelier*)

114

Our three "lanchas" lashed together tow a retinue of *curiaras*. (*Photograph by J. Grelier*)

080

Raymond Pélegri aboard the radio-pirogue. (*Photograph by J. Grelier*)

[p. 80 - D]

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18

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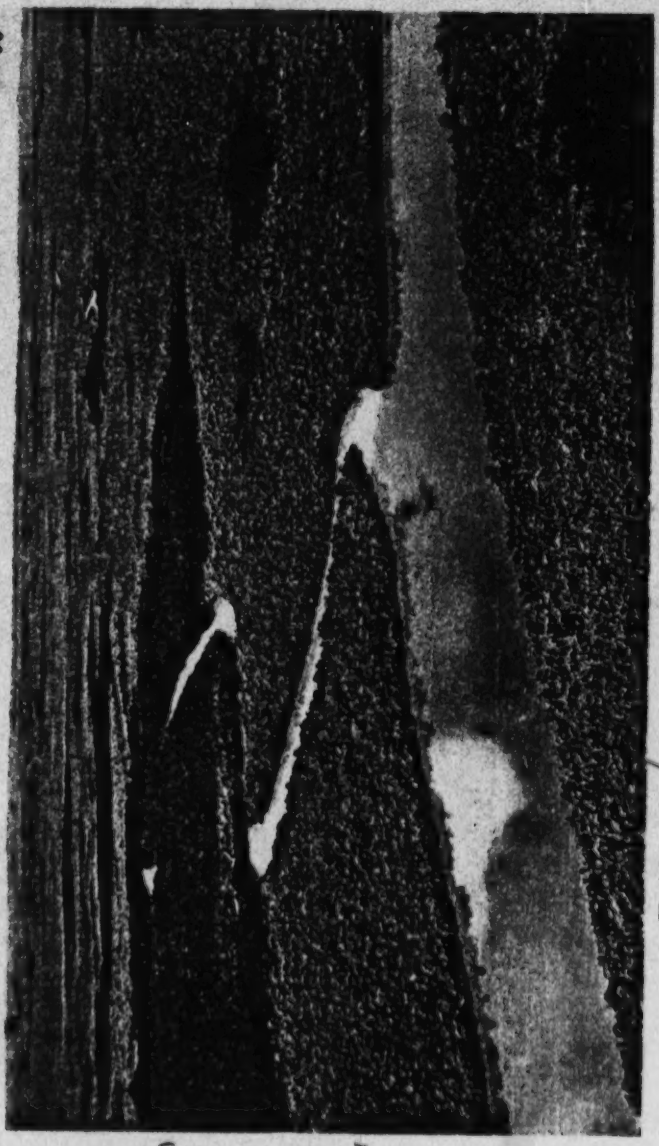

The joining of the Orinoco and the Casiquiare. (Photograph by H.M. King Leopold)

[p. 96-A]

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Waica
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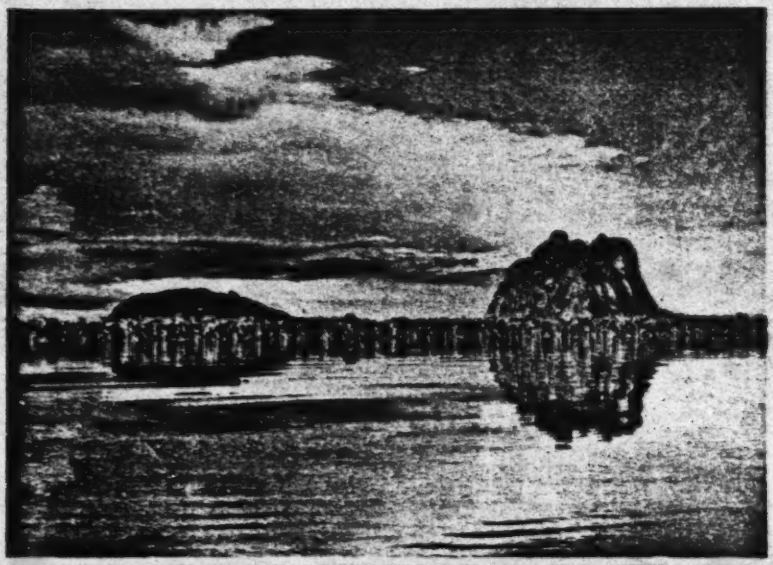

TOP: The famous Piedra del Cocuy juts upwards from the forest.
(*Photograph by H.M. King Leopold*)

BOTTOM: The first Waikas appear between the trees and hail us.
(*Photograph by J. Grelier*)

[p. 96 - B]

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18

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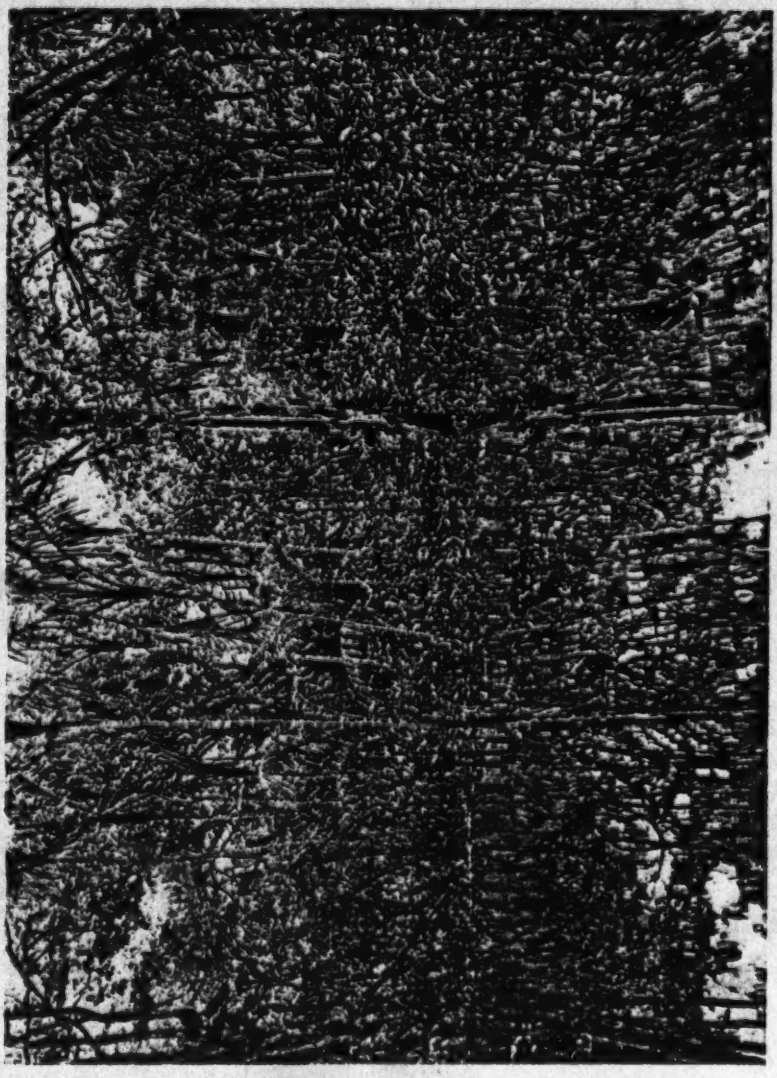

Flooded forest. (Photograph by H.M. King Leopold)

[p. 96-E]

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18

one, a Guahibo, refused to be parted from his wife. Butrón 123
christened her Ana-Maria and she stayed with the expedition as cook and mascot almost to the end.

The Guaharibo Rapids are the first major barrier on the [133] •
Upper Orinoco and only Chaffanjon, Dickey, and Butrón with his wood-cutters had ever got beyond them. Even the precise location of the rapids themselves was open to question since what one has called the Guaharibo Rapids another did not.

Butrón was in command of our convoy, his old launch towing half a dozen *curiaras* and *falcas*. Though the river was in spate there was water enough for the launch only as far as the foot of the rapids. From there on we should have to manhandle our native craft up the rapids as best we could.

Our cargo consisted of heavy cases of reserve foodstuffs and the greater part of the expedition's *manioc* supply. We also carried petrol in forty-four gallon drums and four-and-half gallon cans, and a great mound of newspapers and blotting paper for drying plants which Croizat and Couret had entrusted to our care. Finally we had a considerable quantity of knives, machetes and other barter-ware. Our job was to prepare the way for the main body of the expedition who would follow as soon as their work at Esmeralda, particularly the archaeological diggings, was completed.

The heavily-laden launch made slow progress against the fast-running current. With the river full to its maximum, the banks, undermined by the rush of water, kept caving in under the weight of their vegetation. Forest trees came spinning and turning downstream. We passed many small tributary streams often without noticing them, so closely knit were the enveloping trees whose lower branches were washed by the water. There seemed no chink in the impenetrable wall of vegetation and I caught myself repeating de Civricux's phrase: "No way but the river, no horizon but the forest." There could be no question of sailing by night through such waters and so we made good use of the last remaining daylight by slinging our hammocks in tiers one above the other so that all fifteen of us could spend a comfortable night under the launch's awning.

The next day we passed the Padamo and its flood waters

9:Grolier K-5 (1991) 1997 8Q18 Yanomama

123 were, if anything, even more violent than those of the Orinoco. At its mouth it is about three hundred yards wide compared to the four hundred yards of the Orinoco just below the juncture. Chaffanjon, doubtless influenced by sudden widening and his growing proximity to the river's source, estimated these widths to be only eighty and one hundred yards respectively. He similarly exaggerated his descriptions of the magnitude of the river-bed. But inaccuracies of this kind were by no means uncommon among explorers of the late century. As Jean Hurault showed of Aristide Coudreau's account of the exploration of the rivers of French Guiana.

123 133 The Padamo comes down Hamilton—probably the highest massif of the Guiana mountains—in a series of waterfalls. It is fed by two major tributaries, the Volcano and the Manicuni, the last named rising in that remarkable "water tower" formed by the junction of the Sierra Parima and the Sierra Pacaraima; here rise the Ventuari, the Erebato, the Mavaca, the Auari and the Orinoco.

Three hours later we reached the Ocamo, above which the Orinoco becomes noticeably narrower, for only the Mavaca now remains as a tributary of importance. The Mavaca, whose upper reaches were explored by Cardona in 1941, runs practically parallel to the Orinoco in a generally westerly direction until it is diverted northwards where it meets the mountains and joins the main river. These mountains are shown in Díez de la Fuente's sketch-maps and are the cause of the Orinoco's north-western change of course as far as Esmeralda. Formed of layers of sandstone, their summits tower high above the forest. We had not realized that the sandstone Roraima Formation extended so far west, for that matter, so far south. Until then, we had accepted the generally-held belief that the granite mass of Pacaba and Cocuy was typical of the mountains east and south of Esmeralda. Observing from the river, it seemed to us that the sandstone beds were not horizontal, though it was not possible to observe either the angle or direction of their dip.

[27] We were using Harrison Rice's sketch-map [illegible] embracing the Río Negro, the Casiquiare, and the Upper

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18

Orinoco to the Guaharibo Rapids. On this the river's course is given in great detail, showing not only the major tributaries but a great many minor ones as well, though there is no indication of their size. From first-hand experience it was clear to us that the contribution of some of the lesser tributaries was anything but negligible. There are, for instance, the Iguapo, which joins the Orinoco from the right ten miles above Esmeralda after itself being joined by a river its own size, and another river, unnamed as far as I know, which has its mouth midway between the Padamo and the Ocamo. And entering from the other bank come the Lipe and the Icipe, of which the latter is eighty yards wide at the confluence. Of these four only the Iguapo has been explored and that by Diez de la Fuente.

Above the Mavaca the Orinoco's mean width is less than two hundred yards. Its general direction of flow is east to west with a slight northern tendency and surprisingly, since it nowhere else does so in its thousand miles journey from Mavaca to the sea, it twists and turns pronouncedly.

Since we had left Esmeralda the only birds we had seen were single specimens of black ibis, large kingfishers and droves of white egrets. The egrets would sit craning their necks in the trees and, as we approached, would fly up only to settle down a little farther away. It was as though no human being had ever disturbed their forests. Once or twice we saw a pair of otters diving from a rock or dead tree stump and once we shot at an anaconda which was placidly coiled round a tree. We watched as it slowly unwound and disappeared into the murky water.

That evening we took one of the *curiaras* up a small tributary and fished, but the spate was too strong. Instead of fish we gathered some forest cocoa whose pulp is a refreshing drink when newly made.

The First Waïkas

The Padamo and Ocamo rivers are inhabited by Guaharibos. Above the Ocamo, the inhabitants of the Orinoco's banks call themselves Waïkas. They closely resemble the Guaharibos we had met at Esmeralda but are, perhaps, a little more primitive. Some had had previous contact with Butrón's wood-cutters.

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Waica

He told us that the

499 building of their crude bridges is a lengthy and laborious business and quite impossible when the river was in spate.

123 We returned to the river to find that those we had left behind had removed the boats to a safe distance—a wise precaution, since it was desirable not to excite the greed of the natives. Many an expedition, we knew, had failed through being looted because this elementary precaution had [648] been overlooked. Furthermore, such incidents can lead to serious conflict, as Cardona had learnt on more than one occasion. When dealing with such primitives, caution, good humour and nursery diplomacy are the essential safeguards.

As we pressed on up-river other Waïkas hailed us [illegible] banks. We did not stop, nor did we make any presents of *manioc*, knives and machetes to those who followed us, running through the undergrowth, and gesticulating and shouting as they ran. We spent the night in the shelter of a rocky island they could not reach.

The Guaharibo Rapids

123 By now the river's width was no more than a hundred and
● 133 fifty yards. Though its course no longer wound as it had, the current was no less strong. Rocky banks that plunged steeply into the water and boulders across the river-bed created violent currents and our engines had to go full out to give us the least headway. If the water had been low we should have been able to pass only with the greatest of difficulty. We passed through one such rocky race which Butrón said was the Guaharibo Rapids. Actually they were the Yamaraquin Rapids marked on Hamilton Rice's map and characterized by a huge pyramid-shaped reef. Butrón called the rapids, where we intended setting up Base Camp 2, the Waïka Rapids, distinguished, so he said, by a group of islands of rock and sand, of which two were comparatively large. These were mentioned by both Rice and Dickey, who called them the Gua- [13] haribo Rapids. Rice gave their precise position as Latitude 2° 18′ 18″ N., Longitude 64° 38′ 46″ W. We arrived there at eight o'clock on the morning of the 17th.

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18

The Guaharibo Rapids are caused by the presence of a barrier of extra-hard rock—granite diorite or diabase—which sand and water cannot erode so easily as the granite base. The water meets this barrier and either pours over it in a waterfall or descends less precipitously through a race strewn with rocks and reefs which mark the slow recession of the fall. Sand worn from the rock also accumulates to form islands. The main race from its crest is about two hundred yards long, secondary channels being set up by the presence of islands. On the largest of these islands we set up camp.

Here the river again ceases to be navigable, but we hoped by using the greater depth of the flood waters to be able to push our way up through one of the secondary channels. If this failed, the only alternative would be to haul the boats overland. Whatever happened, these rapids marked the end of a phase. Once passed, they would cease to be an objective, becoming instead no more than a stage in our progress to the river's source.

[pp. 122-169 not processed]

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Waica

But ibis in immense droves refused to be disturbed as they covered each new sandbank that was born.

The water was as clear as if it had been filtered, its reflection of the sun blinding. Dark patches of smooth water amid the rippled surface elsewhere betrayed the next sandbanks to uncover.

We left behind the Padamo, Ocamo and the Mavaca, and all the time the river got narrower. We passed the nights on great flat platforms of rock which got larger as the water went down; with machetes we killed fish trapped in the rocky pools left by the receding stream. A dish of ananas and fish, half-soup, half-stew, is very tasty. It is called *sancoco* and from now on became our staple diet.

From Esmeralda we had brought supplies of sugar, coffee, salt, some oil and four big baskets of *manioc* from which we made coarse bread at all hours of the day. Several times we saw fresh water turtles clinging to the rocks and once or twice succeeded in catching one. But they are wily creatures and usually they dived before we could get near them. One we caught was handicapped by an injured foot which the men asserted was the work of a caribe. Unfortunately, it was too early for the females to be laying their eggs in the sand—they would have been manna, indeed.

We arrived at Platanal on November 21st to find that the bridge had been cut down and learned that this had been deliberately done "for strategic reasons". The Indians greeted us like old friends and unhesitatingly took us to the village. There we found feverish activity on all sides. A boy had been kidnapped from the plantation and another killed by an arrow through the chest. The corpse had been cremated amid ritual weeping and the ashes stored by the family in an urn sealed by wax. Not until the death had been avenged could they be mixed with the dust of the lad's ancestors.

The men had strengthened and consolidated the fortified enclosure and cut down the screen of trees round the village. Sentries had been posted and the entry through the fortification had been concealed by palm-leaves. Women were

similar to that presented here, and I regard my own efforts in this area as supplemental to the generally excellent ethnographic work of Zerries (1964) and Schuster (1958). Without genealogical data it is not possible to estimate the degree to which marriage practices deviate from stated preference, nor to grasp the importance of these deviant cases in Yąnomamö politics.

The histories of the five villages are equally important, as they illustrate the role of warfare in determining settlement pattern, the development of political ties between villages, and the process of village splitting. These factors provide the matrix within which the genealogical data become meaningful.

Piecing together the history of these groups of villages proved to be a difficult task. The geographical area under discussion is unexplored and unmapped. Not even major rivers are accurately known in their upper courses, so that of two published versions of the Siapa River I have had to choose the one most consistent with the account given to me by the Indians. The major problem in this regard has been the identification of a large river known to the Yąnomamö as the Shukumöna-u, whose headwaters lie near the source of the Orinoco River. According to my Yąnomamö informants (people who have either lived on this river or have visited or raided villages located on it), the Shukumöna-u, in its middle course, is nearly as large as the Orinoco at its junction with the Mavaca River. It flows in a westerly

direction, and lies between the Mavaca River and a series of mountains. At a few points the Shukumõna-u may be reached from the Mavaca tributaries in less than a day's walk.

Early maps of Venezuela show the Siapa River extending nearly to the headwaters of the Orinoco River, as the Indians claim the Shukumõna-u does, and lying between the Mavaca River and the mountains that separate Brazil from Venezuela. I have therefore used a 1936 edition of a map published by the Venezuelan National Cartographic Office for the course of the Siapa River, which I take to be the Shukumõna-u of the Yąnomamõ. I have used more recent maps, also obtained from the same office, for the course of the Orinoco, and have drawn the Mavaca River from information I obtained from the Indians and my own exploration of this river up to the village of Iwahikoroba-tedi, which I unsuccessfully attempted to contact in September of 1965. Maps B and C, pp. 54 and 148, are based on these sources.

In reconstructing the history of the village movements, particularly in locating old habitation sites, I have relied on a few well-known geographical landmarks along the Orinoco River. Specifically, two large rapids have guided me; Penascal, above Ruemi-u (Shuwimõwi-bora in Yąnomamõ) and Raudal Guaharibo (Karãbã-bora in Yąnomamõ) near the present village of Kashorawã-tedi.

I employed three sources of information to locate present villages. First, my own knowledge for those villages I personally visited. Second, information from James P.

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10:Chagnon E-4.6 (1964-1966) 1967 SO18 Yanoama SO18

351 large entrance, that leading to the river or stream. All entrances are covered with dry leaves and brush in the evening and the slightest movement of the covering creates sufficient noise to alert the dogs.

133 [137] The Yąnomamö occupy a relatively homogeneous geographical region of low-lying tropical jungle interrupted by densely-wooded hills that sometimes reach an altitude of 2,500 feet, some 2,000 feet above the elevation of the general

361 terrain. Larger hills are more common in the headwaters of [133] [484] the Orinoco and along the boundaries separating Brazil from Venezuela, but the Indians prefer to make their villages in the lowlands on small streams, as all of their travelling is [179] done on foot. Only recently have the Yąnomamö begun moving to the larger rivers, where they may obtain canoes and steel tools from foreigners. In 1950 there was only one Yąnomamö village, Mahekodo-tedi, on a navigable portion of the Orinoco River; since then at least seven or eight villages have moved to the Orinoco or one of its larger tributaries in order to gain access to trade goods (axes and machetes) foreign to their culture. The overwhelming number of Yąnomamö villages, [221] however, can only be reached by walking to them. During the [181] wet season (April-September) travel all but ceases between villages because the trails linking villages are inundated.

241 The Yąnomamö are slash-and-burn horticulturists, subsisting mainly on plantains and bananas, of which they cultivate four or five varieties each. Following these crops in economic importance are several root crops, including taro,

10:Chagnon E-4.5 (1964-1966) 1967 6Q18 Yanoama 6Q18

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[Namowei-tedi Group]
[Paruritawä-tedi Group]

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MAP C
HISTORY OF
NAMOWEI-TEDI
AND
PARURITAWA-TEDI

[Namowei-tedi Group]

The headman of Wareta-tedi, Shamaiyowä, and some of his kinsmen went to visit their allies on the latter's invitation, but Musirawä's group treacherously killed Shamaiyowä and two of his followers. Not wanting to participate in the raiding against their old allies, the Namowei-tedi established a new garden and moved away from the Wareta-tedi. A number of individuals in the present populations of Patanowä-tedi and Bisaasi-tedi trace descent back to the headman of Wareta-tedi, as the latter had demanded women in return for his protection. In ca. 1910 the Namowei-tedi moved to their new garden at Namowei.

Area 3: Namowei-tedi

This area is quite mountanous and the group took its name from one of the ranges, Namowei-käkö--"sharpness." They lived here long enough to make three different gardens (Makei, Shodemi, and Amatakö), but ultimately were forced to abandon the area because of renewed raiding from their old enemies, the Boreta-tedi. Having no friends to the north and several old enemies to the east, the Namowei-tedi moved west and established their garden at Hąhoyaoba-täka in ca. 1920.

Area 4: Hąhoyaoba-tedi

The old allies of the Namowei-tedi, the Wareta-tedi, were forced to abandon their site and move west. They settled in the area immediately south of the Namowei-tedi, splitting into two villages (Hasaböwä-tedi and Ashadowä-tedi), and continued to remain on good terms with the Namowei-tedi.

MAP D
The Location of
Uraricaá and
Mavaca Yąnomamö

occupying five different sites, each having its own house and garden. These five groups recombined into a single unitary village only when warfare threatened. To the southwest of the Uraricaá area, in the headwaters of the Parima River, the villages tend to be larger and more nucleated. On the Upper Parima River villages have a permanent centralized site to which the dispersed extended families may retreat when raids are imminent. Warfare is more common in this area than on the Uraricaá. The Parima Mountains separate this group of Yąnomamö from those whose social organization is described in this thesis. Southwest of the Parima Mountains intensity of warfare is similar to that found in the Mavaca basin. Corresponding to this increase in intensity is a change in type of settlement: palisaded villages are general southwest of the Parima Mountains, whereas they are found only sporadically or not at all to the northeast.

There is likewise an apparent cline in population density isomorphic with the cline in warfare intensity. Yąnomamö villages in Brazil are progressively smaller and more widely scattered as one proceeds northeastward from the Parima Mountains. It is tempting to correlate the reduction in warfare intensity with the demographic pattern. However, another factor complicates the picture: the Yąnomamö have more contact with other tribes (Makiritare and Arekuna) in the northeast extension of their territory; in many cases they live in the same villages with these tribes. I suspect that the contact they have with the Carib-speaking groups also

[p. iv]

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1966) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

2

Adaptation

128 THE YANOMAMÖ ADAPTATION to their physical, social, and intellectual environments is dealt with in this chapter.

The Physical Environment

131 Kaobawä's village[1] is Upper Bisaasi-teri, located at the confluence of the Mavaca
133 and Orinoco Rivers. Like most of the villages in this area, it lies at an altitude of about
361 450 feet. While some villages in Brazil reach 3000 feet in altitude, most Yanomamö villages are located at much lower elevations (Fig. 2-1).

137 The general area around Kaobawä's village is a low, flat plain interrupted occasionally by gently rolling hills and, more rarely, by a few low mountain ridges. The land is entirely covered with jungle, even the tops of the mountain ridges.

The jungle is relatively dense and characterized by numerous species of palm and hardwood trees. The forest canopy keeps the sunlight from penetrating to the ground, but scrub brush and vines manage to grow in relatively great abundance in most places, making it difficult to walk along the trails. Thorny brush is especially heavy along the banks of streams, where adequate sunlight and a constant supply of water provide ideal circumstances for its growth.

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128 [1]See map, Fig. 2-8. Villages other than Kaobawä's have been included because they are discussed in this
126 and also in a later chapter. Presently occupied villages are indicated in upper-case lettering and by shading. The area shown in this map is unexplored, except for the zone immediately adjacent to the Orinoco River. The map is, therefore, largely calculated guesswork. To establish dates of occupation I estimated ages of individuals and obtained their stated places of birth. Distance and geographical location were determined by compass readings and measured in sleeps required to reach the location from a given point. I also visited many of the locations shown. While I was in Brazil in 1967, I checked the map locations with informants there, being encouraged by the fact that they independently gave approximately the same information. Fig. 2-8 is a simplified version of the more detailed map c in my doctoral thesis (Chagnon 1966). For more information regarding the techniques used in making the map, consult the thesis.

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Fig. 2-1. A Yąnomamö village and plantain garden, aerial view (Toototobi River, Brazil).

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TRAILS AND TRAVEL. Trails lead out from the village in several directions. Some of them terminate in the gardens that surround the village, but a few of them continue on into the jungle and lead eventually to other villages. The unexperienced eye would not recognize them as trails, as they are hardly more than winding paths through brush, over or around logs, through streams and swamps, and up hills. The Yąnomamö take the most direct route to their destination, regardless of the terrain. A foreigner learns how to recognize a trail only after considerable experience. The most telltale signs are the numerous broken twigs at about knee height left by Yąnomamö travelers who compulsively keep their hands occupied snapping off brush and twigs as they walk. Another sign is the occasional log that is worn smooth from the tread of numerous travelers who prefer to walk along a log rather than go around it.

The most commonly used trail from Kąobawä's village leads to the two Shamatari villages, Reyaboböwei-teri and Mǫmariböwei-teri, southwest of Upper Bisaasi-teri. Hardly a week goes by in the dry season without a few individuals making a trip from one of these villages to Bisaasi-teri or vice versa. A group of young men can make this trip in one day if they walk rapidly and leave early in the morning. Older men, women, and children must plan on a two day journey, as they walk more slowly and rest more frequently. There are a number of temporary shelters along the trail built by previous visitors, so the traveler does not have to spend much time putting one of these into repair should he decide to camp overnight.

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11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

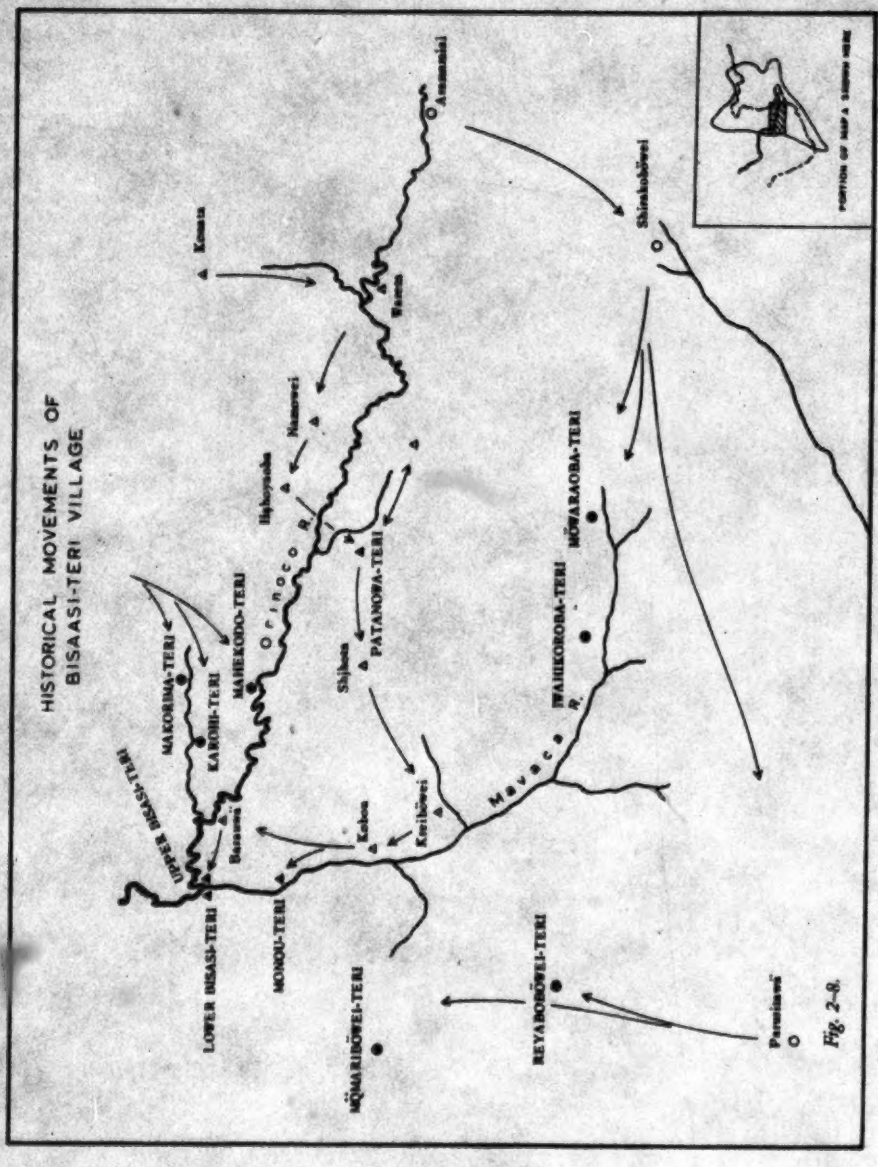

Fig. 2-8.

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